$3.99

# THE SCHOOL THAT PUTNAM VALLEY BUILT

**PUTNAM VALLEY SCHOOL — 1935**

*AN ADVENTURE IN THE QUEST FOR BETTER RURAL EDUCATION*

Written and Edited by:
ISRAEL BEN SCHEIBER

# A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

This book, produced on time taken off from my demanding work as a Labor Arbitrator with its completion deadlines, has benefitted greatly from the Minutes of the Central School Committee and of Putnam Valley's first Board of Education, both kept by the Clerk, F. Bruce Adams to whom I am particularly indebted.

To my able secretary, Jane Akin, I owe thanks for her patience in helping to make this Chronology more readable and its language and structure more in keeping with my thinking.

To my sister in-law, Josephine Scheiber, I owe my deepest thanks for her helpful criticism at the early stages of the book.

To my wife, Augusta, my appreciation for her constant encouragement and stimulation throughout this endeavor.

# P R E F A C E

This narrative deals with the conversion of five Little Red School House rural districts, the remainder of what was originally nine Little Red School House districts in the town of Putnam Valley, New York, a community which is not much more than a fly-speck on the map of the state of New York, into one central school district.

It is primarily written to preserve the record of what was for me and a few of my friends and neighbors a stimulating, interesting and rewarding experience, and in the hope that it may be an interesting and helpful guide to others in the many thousands of rural school house areas which may find themselves confronted with similar problems.

I have encountered considerable difficulty in keeping the personal pronoun within reasonable limits to avoid giving the appearance of an exercise in autobiography, and it is hoped that this will be understood.

Putnam Valley's First Board of Education

Elijah Tompkins, George Sackrider, Israel Ben Scheiber, Jack McAdie and Bruce Adams

This Chronology is especially dedicated to F. Bruce Adams, for more than 20 years my effective colleague on the School Board, with respect, affection and appreciation.

It is also in tribute to the people of Putnam Valley who built the central school.

T A B L E  O F  C O N T E N T S

INTRODUCTION . . . . . v

PUTNAM VALLEY'S PHYSICAL FEATURES AND SETTLEMENT BACKGROUND . . 1

CENTRALIZATION GETS UNDER WAY . . . . . 6

PUTNAM VALLEY'S FIRST BOARD OF EDUCATION . . 24

PUTNAM VALLEY APPROVES CENTRAL SCHOOL . . . 41

BOARD OF EDUCATION DID THOROUGH JOB OF PLANNING . . . . . 61

THE MINUTES . . . . . 70

AS TIME MARCHES ON . . . . . 102

FINIS . . . . . 108

# I N T R O D U C T I O N

At the ripe age of 85 years, a period of time which included much activity and some achievement though of no world shaking import, I am from time to time reminded that times have changed since these achievements took place and that conditions and problems are different now, and what was easily possible then is not so possible now.

By way of one of many examples of the way little Putnam Valley handled its bonding problem and the way a similar problem involving a far greater sum of money was recently handled by its neighbors, as I write I have before me a local newspaper of recent date which features on page 1 an article headlined, "Delay in Selling School Bonds Will Cost Many More Dollars." It goes on to tell that "the neighboring dormitory authority is currently going to the bond market to sell a total of $60 million worth of bonds at the prevailing nine percent, instead of the five percent in effect when the construction of the dormitory was first approved."

According to this recent local newspaper account, it appears that:

> "The twenty-one school district members of the Northern Westchester and Putnam Bureau of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) may have to pay considerable increases in their annual debt service to BOCES, thanks to a tight money market and rising interest rates.
>
> In a letter to local school boards, read at last night's session of the Peekskill Board of Education, BOCES has disclosed that long term bonds to finance the 1970 construction of the BOCES campus in Yorktown are just being sold.
>
> The local boards have been paying large amounts each year to pay off the $10.4 million in BOCES construction costs. The rate of interest which the local boards have been paying was about six percent. Now BOCES has informed the local boards that the long term bonds are just being sold, and interest will likely be 10 or 11 percent, and the hike will have to be passed on to each of the districts.
>
> Since 1970 Peekskill has paid more than $750,000 to Northern Westchester and Putnam BOCES in debt service for the construction of the campus. The other districts have been paying also. The districts' amount to be paid depends on the wealth of the individual district, according to an assistant business manager of BOCES.
>
> The reason why the long term bonds were not purchased five years ago, when the

local districts began paying, and the construction took place, is that short term low interest notes were sold while officials of the State Dormitory Authority waited for a better money market.

The dormitory authority is currently going to the bond market to sell a total of $60 million worth of bonds to finance BOCES construction projects for Northern Westchester and Putnam BOCES and nine other school districts in New York State.

However, the BOCES representative said that the situation where higher interest rates are now going to be imposed is not the fault of BOCES, but rather because of actions by the New York State Dormitory Authority.

Just what specific impact the higher interest rates will have on the amount each local district is paying is uncertain. The representative is still hopeful that between BOCES, the State Dormitory Authority and the State Education Department some less costly solution can be worked.

The possibility of some emergency state aid or legislation to provide relief to the hard pressed local districts has been mentioned also."

As it appeared in the Peekskill Star of March 12, 1976, it was discovered that the authority of the State Dormitory Authority to issue bonds was very questionable, and it became necessary for the New York State Legislature to step into the situation

and first write and then re-write a bill to help out this very difficult financial situation.

Since BOCES could not under the law float its own bonds, it was decided that the bonds should be floated through the several school districts. This, however, according to the Peekskill Star, would result in $3 million more in the total cost of running BOCES.

Although the fiscal bonding problem faced by little Putnam Valley at the inception of the centralized school district was a bond issue of $200,000 a similar problem was involved as above set forth, and the method by which little Putnam Valley handled its problem, versus how the large State Dormitory Authority has handled its far more costly problem, may be interesting, helpful and instructive.

# PUTNAM VALLEY'S PHYSICAL FEATURES AND SETTLEMENT BACKGROUND

Putnam Valley is one of the six townships that make up the county of Putnam. It is five miles wide by about nine miles long, includes 21,868 acres and is 34.2 square miles in size.

It lies wholly in the highlands, and like the greater part of Phillipstown from which it was separated on March 14, 1839, as Putnam County had been separated from Duchess County in March, 1807, it is rough and mountainous except for the valleys, Canopus and Peekskill Hollow, which stretch through the entire length of the town from north to south and which once had areas that were partly fertile with possibilities of cultivation.

Because of its limited possibilities for farming, early settlers tended to choose Westchester County, Duchess County and the northern, more agriculturally desirable areas in which to settle, and by-passed Putnam County, especially rough and mountainous Putnam Valley which, however was

scenically most attractive.

The Wappinger Indians, a tribe of the Mohegan Nation, were its first inhabitants, and there was an Indian settlement at Canopus Hollow and also one at Tompkins Corners.

At the time of its founding, Putnam Valley consisted of a handful of small settlements, chief of which were Oregon, Crofts, Tompkins Corners, Canopus and Tinker Hill.

During the period of almost a century from its creation as a township, it experienced no growth. Having no industries or rewarding agricultural possibilities, the young people tended to leave home early in search of areas with more promising opportunities.

It is significant that a century after the town was legally founded, of the nine Little Red School House districts which had previously been erected, only five existed. However, at about that time, the great improvement in highways and the means of transportation of the first few miles

of the Taconic Parkway opened up Putnam Valley to the residents of the steadily growing New York City, and it rapidly grew more suburban as a community of country homes and estates. In Lake Peekskill more than 2400 lots were sold in a short time and more than 136 homes were built by 1931.

For summer homes purposes, its virgin landscape, wooded hills and surrounding nine natural, spring-fed lakes added greatly to its desirability and its growth.

With the passing of years, increasingly, summer residents, in part influenced by the Depression, remodelled their summer homes for all year round use, which brought about an increase in the school population.

My interest in Putnam Valley stemmed from my activity as a member of a committee of the Board of Trustees of New York City's Madison House Settlement. We were charged with the duty of locating a suitable site for a summer camp for the use of underprivileged children of New York City's Lower East Side. After many months spent in search of

the considerable countryside within sixty to seventy miles of the City, an attractive, formerly cultivated farm was located and purchased in Putnam Valley.

During these many months of searching for a suitable and attractive spot for the Settlement camp, and too, having a young and growing family which would enjoy and benefit from the same surroundings, my interest in Putnam Valley became personal, as well. Shortly thereafter, I purchased an old and neglected, roof-leaking house with some acreage within a short walking distance of the camp site which my growing family has used as a summer home for the past 55 years.

After some remodeling and the erection of some additional accommodations for the campers, Camp Madison began to function, and for a time was known locally as the "Jew Camp." At the time, only one Jew resided in all of Putnam Valley.

One Saturday night when the young campers were gathered at the big barn singing camp songs

and otherwise engaged in recreational activities, some shouting broke out from a few of the young people who were assembled on the barn porch. It became apparent that a burning cross was on the hillside over the camp grounds. It was quickly put out with little damage to camp property. However, the next day after an investigation, I, having served for some eight years on a New York City local school board, was left with the definite impression that the community could benefit by the improvement of its educational facilities.

Using my previous school board experience, after some two weeks of consideration, investigation and planning, I obtained the names of the trustees of the five school districts, none of whom I had ever met, and wrote to each one asking him to meet with me to consider the formation of a Putnam Valley Central School District, to replace its various little one room red schoolhouses.

## CENTRALIZATION GETS UNDER WAY

Being well aware of the fact that a recital of the Minutes of the 102 meetings which took place during the first year after the Central School District was formed and the Board of Education was elected is apt to be boring and to make dull reading, I have largely eliminated the Minutes of the central school committee meetings that were set forth in the newspaper reports and correspondence that will form a part of this chronology.

I have been selective in the choice of Minutes that are here presented, and hope and believe that the excellence of these Minutes, as written by Bruce Adams, the Clerk of the Board of Education, and the rather interesting and unusual facts set forth, will contribute to a picture of the total adventure in rural education which may be of sufficient interest to the many concerned with education in general and with what was involved in changing over a little red school house dis-trict like Putnam Valley's one room Little Red

School House system to the centralized system with its opportunities for superior service to our children and our community.

Of special interest is the fact that during these early years, "All motions and/or resolutions offered and seconded (at each meeting) were carried unanimously" with rare, if any, exceptions. Therefore, in the interest of brevity, only exceptions to this unusual state of unanimity will be mentioned.

Also, while some of the items reported would appear to be related to small matters, we are dealing here with a relatively small community in which what today may appear to be of small importance had, in fact, a significant impact upon the community, the children, and the people involved.

Turning then to the Minutes of the first meeting called in connection with the centralization project, what do we find?

Sunday, October 15, 1933

At the invitation of Mr. Israel Ben Scheiber, the following named Trustees

met at his office at Tompkins Corners on the above date, to discuss and plan action for the creation of a CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT in Putnam Valley.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Dist. No. 3, | Adams Corners, | F. Bruce Adams |
| Dist. No. 4, | Crofts " , | Marion T. Collignon |
| Dist. No. 5, | Tompkins " , | Garrett V. Cochrane |
| Dist. No. 7, | Oscawana Heights, | William Chapman for his wife Ethel |
| Dist. No. 9, | Oregon | William H. McCarthy, George Sackrider Elmer Barger |

District Superintendent of Schools, Mr. James H. Brooks, was also present. Mr. Scheiber acted as chairman of the meeting.

Mr. Scheiber related that he had called the trustees together to discuss the possibilities of, and lay plans for, the creation of a Central School District.

He explained the probability of securing assistance from the Federal Government under its Public Works program, whereby a donation of 30% of the cost of construction of a school building, and a 30 year bond issue at 4% would be available. Details of procedure; state participation in construction; maintenance and increased educational aids; community and scholastic benefits of centralization, and many other features of the plan were discussed by all present. Mr. Scheiber clearly expounded many points of pertinent law. Mr. Brooks assisted in outlining procedure, etc.

At the chairman's request, each trustee

was asked to express his or her personal attitude toward centralization, and how they felt their respective communities would receive the plan. All were convinced that centralization was needed; that it would greatly benefit the children; and that the whole countryside would find a large, good school a most valuable asset. The trustees at Oregon, Tompkins Corners, and Adams Corners were confident that their respective districts would vote unanimously for centralization; at Crofts Corners and Oscawana Heights there seemed likely a division of opinion, with a strong probability that the prospect of Federal assistance would evaporate much of the opposition.

At this point, the chairman suggested that the trustees organize as a committee to propagate, lay and execute plans for, and create a Central School District, to consist of their respective districts and such others as might reasonably be included. This was done by a unanimous vote; Mr. Scheiber was elected Chairman, Mr. Adams, Secretary. Because Oregon had three trustees, it was proposed and carried that each of the other districts add two members to the committee for balance. Proposed were: Grace Hillyer and Jessie Lawrence for No. 3; William Finnigan and William Recksiek for No. 4; Ben Scheiber and Bessie Perry for No. 5; and two unnamed for No. 7.

It was then decided to call special school meetings in each of the districts, to determine public sentiment, as the first required preliminary step. Dates were set as follows: Thursday, October 26th, for Districts 3, 5, & 9; Monday, October 30,

for District No. 4; and Tuesday, October 31, for District No. 7. It was further suggested and agreed that Mr. Scheiber, Mr. Adams, and by invitation, Mr. Harry Silleck and Mr. Matthew Watson, attend the meetings of Districts 4 and 7 to expound and exhort the plan.

The committee was asked to convene again at Mr. Scheiber's office on the following Sunday morning, October 22.

The Peekskill Star's Summarization of the Project

In lieu of the separate Minutes of the Central School Committee and those of the first two years or so of its first Board of Education, the following copy of an article published in the Peekskill Star will present a graphic picture of the Committee's work and the activities of Putnam Valley's first Board of Education during the first two or three years.

"SCHEIBER TELLS HISTORY OF CENTRALIZATION OF PUTNAM VALLEY SCHOOL FROM THE BEGINNING

President of Board of Education Presents an Interesting Review of the Two Year Struggle to Give the Township the Very Latest Facilities for Modern Education.

On October 15, 1933, Israel Ben Scheiber called together the trustees of the five independent common school districts in the Town of Putnam Valley for the purpose of discussing the advisability of inaugurating a movement to change these five districts into one Central School District and thereafter to proceed with the erection of a modern, central school house in the Town of Putnam Valley.

Every one of the existing school trustees in the township attended this meeting and expressed great interest in the proposal, as a result of of which a Central School Committee was promptly formed for the purpose of vigorously supporting and carrying out this movement.

Without loss of time, this Central School Committee, as enlarged, consisting of F. Bruce Adams, Garret V. Cochrane, Grace Hillyer, Marian T. Collingnon, Elmer Barger, William McCarthy, William Recksiek, William Finnigan, William O'Brien, George Sackrider, Paul Schmittman, Martin Stryker, Ethel Chapman, and Mr. Scheiber, went to work and after two additional meetings during which the various phases of centralization were carefully gone into, and special consideration given to the question of increased taxation as a result of the Central School, the committee felt that it could safely sponsor the project and bring it up for consideration before the taxpayers of the five individual school districts.

Centralization Starts: During the week of October 31st, meetings were called as prescribed by law in the five different districts. These meetings were very largely attended and after a complete and patient presentation of the facts before the taxpayers and other lengthy discussion, all five of the districts voted in favor of centralization. Next, an application for

centralization was filed with the State Education Department. The six long months which followed seemed never-ending. The committee found that many other communities had learned from neighboring central districts the many advantages of school centralization, and the large State aid to be had under it, and were clammering for centralization; that the Department, now that the pioneer stage of centralization was passed, was more interested for reasons of economy, in centralizing 25 or 30 common school districts into one central school district, than five, as it was proposed to do in Putnam Valley; that the Commissioner of Education recommended consolidation with the Cold Spring district; that the prospects of success, in short, were none too good.

Numerous Trips to Albany: Undaunted, the committee finally decided to redouble its efforts, and piling into automobiles descended upon the State Department at Albany in order to press for action on its application. Several times thereafter, members of the committee went to Albany to secure action and finally there was much rejoicing that an order was received from Commissioner Graves, laying out the Putnam Valley Central School District.

Under the law it was now necessary to call a committee of the entire proposed central district so that the people might have a final opportunity to vote for or against centralization.

To acquaint them with the facts regarding centralization, a four page tabloid, the Putnam Valley School News, was published by the President and widely distributed, without expense to the taxpayers. The committee worked tirelessly to acquaint their neighbors with the facts and much interest was aroused. When on the evening of June 9, 1934, the vote was

tallied, Putnam Valley was found to favor centralization by a vote of 190 to 72.

The following week with many representative citizens as candidates, Elijah E. Tompkins, George B. Sackrider, Israel Ben Scheiber, John B. McAdie and F. Bruce Adams were elected members of Putnam Valley's first Board of Education.

The School Board on Wheels: Now followed many months of traveling over the state to inspect other central schools. On Friday of each week the Board would leave, usually about 7 A.M. and often did not return from its trip until past midnight.

Almost a score of buildings were carefully inspected and notes made of good points and what to avoid.

Some two dozen architects were interviewed in the effort to find the best possible architect for the school building and finally A.F. Gilbert was selected. From the start, the sketches he submitted showed a clear understanding of the type of building needed and of the particular requirements of our community.

Opposition to the Bond Issue: There was opposition to the bond issue, including a good, old-fashioned protest meeting and fears and prophecies of huge increases in taxes, etc., etc.

Time Has Told! Today, in 1935, a year and a half later, the accuracy of these fears and prophecies can be judged on the basis of our actual experience.

It was predicted and "shown" by actual figures, that in the first year of the operation of the

central school, the tax rate would increase to $17.50 plus, per thousand dollars of assessed valuation.

We know now that the tax rate for this year is $12.77 per thousand dollars.

The Board of Education, through the iniative and activity of the President and the generous cooperation of the Blaine Estates, had received the offer of a gift of 12 handsome acres of land as the site for the new school building, and this site was approved by the State Education Department.

It was asked, "What evidence is there before you that on the proposed school site there will be found an adequate supply of water for the needs of the children, requiring 15 gallons of water daily for each pupil?"

We know now that we have on the school site an artesian well giving a yield of 30 gallons of pure water per minute, which is enough to supply a good-sized community.

It was said that the president of the Board of Education stated that the amount paid by each taxpayer would be about $2 more, without proving his contention.

We know now that the cost to the taxpayer for this year, the first year that the new school house is in operation, has increased only to the extent of $1.42 per one thousand dollars of assessed valuation, which for 80% of our taxpayers assessed at $1,000 or less, is the whole story.

The Bond Issue Passed: When the vote was finally tallied on the evening of October 13th, it was found that more than three times as

many had voted on the bond issue as on the original question of centralization and that 431 had voted in favor of the bond issue and 310 against it.

The applause and the tremendous cheering which followed the announcement of the results must have been heard for miles around.

Land Around Schoolhouse Carefully Restricted: In its travels the Board of Education had noticed in some communities where handsome schoolhouses had been constructed, that next to them and near them, there had subsequently been erected many unsightly factories, public houses, gasoline stations and shanty town developments.

The Board was determined that this must be avoided in Putnam Valley, and after numerous conferences and much effort, it was finally successful, again with the helpful and generous cooperation of the Blaine Estates, in having an agreement signed and recorded, which restricts the land on either side of the schoolhouse for about 1,200 feet against the construction and maintenance of factories, gasoline stations, public garages and numerous other businesses that would be harmful to the school, and likewise makes it impossible for any shanty or collection of cheap houses to be constructed on this land.

Federal Aid Not Taken: From now on, the Board redoubled its efforts. After a thorough investigation the Board came to the conclusion that the 30% grant which was offered by the Federal Government at the time, was of doubtful value in view of the numerous restrictions surrounding this grant, and in view of the fact furthermore, that all of the contractors interviewed admitted frankly that whenever they bid on such work, they added at least 25% to

the amount of their contracts in order to cover themselves.

It is of interest to note that a neighboring school district in Putnam County which started to build the school under a Federal grant fourteen months before our bond issue was passed, has had one contractor abandon the job because of alleged WPA difficulties, and that under a second contractor the job is progressing so slowly that in its issue of November 21, the local newspaper in that community predicted that the building would not be finished for a long time. In any event, it became certain that the job would not be finished for almost a year to come.

School Bonds Sold Independently: An investigation likewise convinced the Board that it did not need the help of the Federal Government in marketing its bonds, but that it would do better without asking any favors of Uncle Sam.

Accordingly, bulletins were printed and mailed out to a great many bond houses. The sale of the bonds was given the widest possible publicity and the Board was finally successful in selling the bonds to bear interest at the rate of $3.80, receiving at the same time a premium of over $700.

This resulted in a saving to our taxpayers of several thousand dollars over the rate of 4% which they would have had to pay to the Federal Government.

Back to the Board of Regents: With the bond issue passed, the Board of Education once more appeared before the Board of Regents, and although at first there was a tendency by the Regents to cut out many features in the interest of economy (remember that the State con-

tributes one-fourth of the cost of the building) ultimately the Board of Education succeeded in convincing the Regents that the Board knew best what the community wanted and needed, and the plans were approved in the form recommended by the Board of Education.

Looking for the Best Contractor: Great pains were taken to make sure that all of the contractors who put in competitive bids for the erection of the schoolhouse should be men of financial responsibility and with the reputation for finishing what they started.

Before the contractor was even permitted to look over the plans, he was required to file a financial statement with the Board of Education and to fill out a questionnaire showing his business record from the day he first went into business.

As a result, when the Henry W. Streeter Corporation was finally selected as the low and successful bidder, it was because the Board of Education was convinced that this firm was reputable, reliable, and financially able to complete its undertaking, as well as because its bid, when the 55 alternates were passed on, was ultimately the lowest.

Because this contract was signed on April 2nd of this year, 1935, and it seemed unlikely that the entire building could be finished in the five and one-half month period which would elapse until it was necessary to open the new school, a clause was inserted in the contract that in any event the two wings must be completed by the beginning of September with full provisions for the running of the school.

To make even more certain of this, a clause was inserted in the contract whereby the con-

tractor would have to pay $100 for each day that he should finish beyond the completion date and this clause was likewise inserted into all of the sub-contracts.

Care As to Bonding Company: A careful study was made of the various bonding companies and the contractor as well as the sub-contractors were required to furnish bonds by one of the five bonding companies which were rated highest.

Proceeds of Bond Issue Safeguarded: The funds which were received as the proceeds of the bond issue were deposited in five of the local banks and those which agreed to put up government bonds as security for this money received the preference in the deposits, so that the money was at all times safe, even in the event that the bank in which it was deposited got into financial difficulties.

Work on the Curriculum: The principals of four of the neighboring central schools were called in by the Board of Education and our special problems explained to them and each was asked to submit what he would regard as a proper curriculum. After a month's study, each of these four educators turned in his curriculum to the Board.

Principal and Staff Carefully Chosen: The Board communicated with Teachers' College of Columbia University and with other educational institutions and individuals in order to make sure that the best possible principal would be available and that the best possible teaching staff would ultimately be chosen. After interviewing about ten applicants for the position of principal, Mr. Hilton E. Alexander was chosen. He, in turn, after interviewing almost two dozen applicants for the teachers' positions, recommended the members of our

present staff and his recommendation was followed by the Board of Education.

Educational Consultant: The children, the teachers and the Board of Education of Putnam Valley have been extremely fortunate in obtaining the volunteer services of Leila V. Stott as educational consultant. She has given wholeheartedly and generously of her many years of experience as one of the outstanding educators of the State of New York in getting our school under way.

Through her connections as Vice President and Extension Director of the City and Country School, as well as with numerous educational agencies, she has brought to Putnam Valley a wealth of rich experience and although acting as a volunteer, she has spent from two to three days of each week at the school since the early part of last August.

Putnam Valley is indeed fortunate in obtaining the services of this splended person and outstanding educator.

The Dirt Begins to Fly: On April 19, 1935 ground was broken. On June 1 the work had progressed so steadily that the foundation was almost completed and cornerstone ceremonies were held which were attended by several hundred of our people. This occasion was graced by the presence of Supreme Court Judge William F. Bleakley and will long be remembered by the people of Putnam Valley.

That Electric Light Reduction: In the course of its work, the Board of Education discovered that the prevailing rates for light and power were, in its opinion, very excessive. It thereupon notified the New York State Electric and Gas Corporation that unless a real reduction were made in the rates, that the Board of

Education would install its own electric light plant. Numerous conferences were held and reduction after reduction rejected by the Board of Education, until finally one offer was made by the New York State Electric and Gas Corp. by which a reduction of 37½ percent would be effected and this was finally accepted.

It is noteworthy that although the Putnam Valley Board of Education was the only one to work for this reduction, that all boards of education and school districts in the 21 townships and villages in Westchester and Putnam Counties with the Hudson Valley District will profit from the reduction.

Expected and Unexpected Headaches: The foregoing is only one of the many problems, some of them expected and some totally unexpected which the Board of Education had to meet and solve. We had our strikes, we struck rock in the sewage disposal field, there were the usual innumerable delays by manufacturers in the delivery of steel and other materials, but the Board of Education stayed closely on the job and one after another, the various obstacles were overcome.

School Opening Declared Holiday: September 16, 1935, the day when the new Putnam Valley Central School was fully completed and opened will long be remembered by the children and those parents who were there.

The Town Board had declared that day to be a legal holiday and had requested all of the residents to fly their flags, so that the whole town took on a gala appearance.

The school grounds were probably the happiest place in the whole town. The children were there, the teachers were there, the Board of Education was there, many of the parents and

taxpayers were there and everybody with a happy smile on his or her face. At last the new school was opened and a dream had come true.

Federal Grant for Grading: When the announcement first came from Washington that in order to put men to work, Uncle Sam proposed to help out local communities with worthwhile projects. The Board of Education at once got busy and prepared and filed plans for a grading project in connection with the school, which was to include the construction of an athletic field. Also the Chairman started a fund-raising project and succeeded in raising by way of various gifts enough money to build the stadium on the athletic field, without cost to our taxpayers.

Under this work and grading project, the government paid for all of the labor used on the job, providing the Board of Education would pay for any machinery and materials used on the job. After several trips to White Plains, the project was approved. The government agreed to contribute $10,700 for labor and this was the first WPA project that actually got under way in all Putnam County.

A group of about 15 men are now at work under the direction of former road superintendent, William H. Tompkins, who is foreman. The WPA authorities at White Plains had at first intended to send in a foreman from out of town, but the Board of Education recommended Mr. Tompkins for this position, feeling not only that he was well qualified, but that it should go to a taxpayer in our community, and its recommendation was accepted.

In this connection, thanks should be given to Mr. George E. Conrad, Manager of Zone "J", Works Progress Administration of New York State and Harry G. Silleck, our Town Supervisor, for their constant help and cooperation.

What Has Gone Into the School: At the school's dedication, Mr. Scheiber stated that, "In the days of our childhood we have all of us read about the 'house that Jack built,' and the materials that went into it.

"Into our Putnam Valley School, however, there have gone far more precious building materials than brick, lumber and cement. For into it has gone the faith of the people of Putnam Valley in the power of learning as an instrument for developing finer boys and girls and men and women.

"Into it, too, has gone the hope that by giving our young people the greatest opportunities that this school presents, that Putnam Valley is making its greatest gift to civilization, since the human race climbs upward only through its children.

"Into its foundation and walls has been built the determination that this school shall stand firm as a barrier against the dark forces which in the old world have robbed education of all moral integrity and have reduced the schools to the status of propaganda machines.

"Only through free education founded on moral integrity is it possible to achieve that political and economic structure which the founders of our Republic dreamed of and fought for.

"In the words of the great English writer, John Ruskin, "Into this edifice has gone such work as our descendants will thank us for, and let us think as we gather here, that a time is to come when this structure will be held sacred, because of its influence upon the lives of our children, and that men will say as they look upon our labor, 'See what our fathers did for us'."

On this occasion the Peekskill Star included the following editorial comment:

PUTNAM VALLEY FORGES AHEAD

The Evening Star is happy to present this special section commemorating the dedication of Putnam Valley's fine new Central School. Having supported the school centralization program for Putnam Valley from the very first, we are glad to take this opportunity of congratulating the people of that enterprising community on its successful completion.

The new Central School marks a big milestone in the history of Putnam Valley. No community can hope for a better and surer path to progress than through the advancement of its public school system.

## PUTNAM VALLEY'S FIRST BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the initial Putnam Valley situation, the Board decided to sell the bonds before construction of the building was started so that it had the benefits both of having the funds available and being able to deposit the proceeds of the sale of the bonds at a larger interest rate than the 3.8% that was payable when the bonds could first be sold.

Also, an examination of the various precautions and the economics practiced by the original Board of Education of Putnam Valley which are hereinafter set forth will provide some explanation for the fact that, when I retired after 25 years of service as its first president, I had an appraisal made of the original central school building and ground improvements which had been built with the proceeds of the original $200,000. With some slight additions, it showed its worth to be $1,250,000.

It must, however, be taken into consideration that the improvements were made during the 1933-34 Depression when the purchasing power of the dollar was much greater than it was later.

Returning now to the early Minutes which present a more detailed picture of the activities which led to the successful completion of the centralization project, selected Minutes or portions thereof may be of interest.

June 16, 1934

> Within a half hour of the determination of their election, the full Board met (at the Justice's Court at Oregon), and organized by electing the following:
>
> President: Israel Ben Scheiber (nominated by Mr. Tompkins)
> Secretary: F. Bruce Adams (nominated by Mr. Sackrider)
> Treasurer: Elijah E. Tompkins (nominated by Mr. McAdie)
>
> In each case the vote was unanimous. The Board then discussed several of its many tasks. The matter of a site was deferred; it was felt that the selection of an architect was most important, and that his advice would be valuable in picking sites. In this connection, it was deemed advisable to "make haste slowly;" that several recognized architects were making overtures for the work; that probably no action

was more important than choosing the right one; and that no member should commit himself until the Board was unanimous. By way of learning their ability, and also to get ideas as to what type of building would be most desirable, it was decided to inspect the newer schools within reasonable distances, at an early date. It was further decided that the public should be kept informed of the Board's activities, the Secretary to act as press agent; and that the continued interest of the Central School Committee should be encouraged. At 12:15 a.m. the meeting adjourned to Friday, at Mr. Scheiber's office.

Minutes of the Board Meeting
June 28, 1934

There was discussion of the petition of several of the parents of children of the Tompkins Corners School, who sought to have the grade pupils of that section sent to Shrub Oak this fall. Although inclined to grant the request, the Board decided to hold the matter under further consideration; to inspect the school building; and to call all the parents together to discuss the proposition.

The appointment of a Clerk to the District was then proposed. Mr. Adams was nominated, and his appointment was carried unanimously by the Board.

It was suggested by the Clerk that Mrs. Ingrid O. Reichert be appointed as Collector to the District. All members concurred, and she was by motion unanimously elected Collector to the District.

Upon the written advice of District Super-

intendent James H. Brooks that a member of the Board might act as Clerk but could not serve as Treasurer, Mr. Tompkins resigned from that office. Mr. Garret V. Cochrane was suggested by Mr. Scheiber, and approved by all the members of the Board.

A large stack of communications from architects were read. There were also several applications for the teaching job at Tompkins Corners.

It was decided to meet weekly, on Fridays. Arrangements were completed to meet at the home of Mr. Sackrider at 8:00 a.m., July 6, to begin an inspection of schools to the south and east. Mr. Sackrider volunteered the use of his car for the purpose.

Minutes of the Board Meeting
July 13, 1934

It was recognized by this time that the summer residents who paid a substantial part of the school and town taxes, and who of course sent no children to their local school, had shown a definite interest in the improvement of our school system. After these facts had been presented on one of the Board's trips to Albany, on the advice of Mr. Brind, of the Legal Department of the State Education Department, the following resolution was offered and carried unanimously.

> RESOLVED: that the ANNUAL MEETING OF CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 3, Towns of Putnam Valley, Carmel and Cortlandt, commonly referred to as the PUTNAM VALLEY CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT, be held on the FIRST TUES-

DAY OF AUGUST of every calendar year.

Upon the reading of a communication from Mr. William Spain, Vice President of the Mahopac National Bank, in which the assurance was given that the District's funds would be guaranteed by U.S. bonds as collateral, it was moved and unanimously carried that the Mahopac bank be the official depository of the District.

Minutes of the Board Meeting
July 27, 1934

The full Board met at 9:00 a.m. for the particular purpose of interviewing 12 architects, who had been notified and assigned a scheduled half hour interview.

The Board was impressed by this fine array of architects, all of whom by their records were outstanding in merit. It was necessary of course for the Board to select only one, and the accrued testimony showed this would be no easy task. At the Board's request, the various architects submitted a written report of their work, etc., to gether with a list of their last four school jobs. Mr. Scheiber stated that he would send letters to the Boards of Education of these, asking their experience with each of their respective architects.

Minutes of the Board Meeting
August 1, 1934

The transportation question was discussed generally. It was decided by unanimous motion that all transportation vehicles must be inspected the first week of each month, by local mechanics, and reports thereof filed with the Board.

Minutes of the Board Meeting
August 3, 1934

The Board met at Bruce Adams' office at about 1:00 p.m. for the purpose of going over various parcels proposed as sites for the new school building. The full Board was present.

The Board decided that all of the properties seen had merit, and should be referred to the State Department and the architect for further consideration.

Minutes of the Board Meeting
August 4, 1934

At the invitation of the Board, Mr. Archibald F. Gilbert, architect, and Mr. James Henderson, his building superintendent or inspector, together with Mr. Brown, Mr. Gilbert's designer, met with the Board. The purpose was to further interrogate Mr. Gilbert, and to meet and hear Mr. Henderson. This was all preliminary to the formal selection of Mr. Gilbert as architect, as the Board had, by a painstaking process of elimination, decided that Mr. Gilbert had to a marked degree all the qualifications it sought; and that its satisfaction as to the supervisory qualifications of Mr. Henderson was all that remained for checking. These interviews were highly satisfactory, and by motion made and unanimously carried, Mr. Gilbert was duly appointed Architect to the Board.

Forthwith, the Board, Mr. Gilbert, and his assistants made the rounds of the proposed sites. Without knowledge of the Board's previous opinion, Mr. Gilbert and his associates declared that two of these were without equal in the state as to their

scenic grandeur. Their accessibility and fitness were also approved.

At about this point, the President of the Board of Education apparently could not refrain from bursting into poetry, which was published in the Putnam Valley Courier as follows, with copies distributed to the unsuccessful architects.

THE SCHOOL BOARD'S DILEMMA
(To all the good architects we couldn't choose)

I am certain our school when it's finished
Should be quite a gem of its kind.
Folks will travel for miles
Just to study our styles
Where beauty and use are combined.

For each architect earnestly tells us
(We've interviewed more than a score)
That his plans are complete,
Inexpensive but neat,
And his structures designed to endure.

And each of them judged by his record,
Appears to have mastered his art,
And to clearly combine
In his plans and design
Each period's loveliest part.

But how to pick out of so many
The best architect that we could,
Is a task you'll admit
That takes wisdom and wit,
When so many of them are good.

So here I am restlessly tossing
In bed, when I should be asleep,

Counting architects over
As 'round me they hover
When I should be counting white sheep.

Minutes of the Board Meeting
August 5, 1934

The full Board met with Mr. Gilbert and our senior teacher, Miss Russell, to discuss what sort of a school building would meet our requirements. It was generally agreed that the early colonial type of structure would be most desirable; that construction should be fireproof throughout; that there should be not less than six regular class rooms, in addition to which there should be: a kindergarten, manual training room, domestic science quarters, a principal's office, a library, teachers' rooms, a clinic room with an adjacent waiting room, a large combination auditorium and gymnasium, and a large so-called general purpose room, which would adjoin an adequate kitchen, and be used for a cafeteria, for special classes, for music, and for small public gatherings, including parent-teachers meetings, etc.

There was much discussion as to all these features, and more; and practical use was for the first time made of the Board's experience in visiting many school plants.

All of this was, of course, preliminary; but afforded the architect some basic ideas as to what was wanted, and an opportunity to prepare some preliminary sketches for further study.

Minutes of the FIRST ANNUAL MEETING of the Voters of the Putnam Valley Central School District, held on August 7, 1934, at the Grange Hall at Adams Corners

Pursuant to notices duly made and published, the first annual meeting of the voters of the Putnam Valley Central School District was held as above indicated. The meeting was called to order by the Clerk at 8:40 p.m. All the members of the Board of Education, and about sixty voters were present.

The Clerk read the notice of the meeting; stated very briefly its purpose; and asked for nominations for a chairman. By motion of Martin Stryker, seconded by Clement Gorley, Israel Ben Scheiber was nominated Chairman, and elected unanimously.

The Chairman stated that the chief business before the meeting was the adoption of a budget for the approaching school term; announced that the Board felt that the budgets adopted in the various districts in May should be re-adopted in their total; and asked the Clerk for such information. The Clerk stated that the total expenditures authorized was $24,558. There was some discussion on the question, which indicated general agreement with the plan, when it was suggested that an additional 10% should be added to cover possible expenses in the Central School project. Accordingly, a motion was made and unanimously carried that a total budget of $27,013 be approved. Approval was unanimous. For the clarity of this record, it should be stated that during the preceding discussion, the question of deduct-

ing the balances on hand was raised and discarded on the grounds that it was necessary to carry over balances yearly to defray expenses incurred before tax receipts were available.

The following resolutions were offered, and unanimously carried:

(1) THAT such funds as have this day been voted for the Budget and shall not have been used for the specific items in such budget, may be used for such disbursements in connection with the Central School project, if and as the Board of Education may deem necessary.

(2) THAT the Treasurers of the old districts be and hereby are authorized to transfer all funds remaining in their hands, to the Treasurer of the Central District.

(3) THAT all outstanding obligations, and interest, of the old districts be and hereby are assumed by the Central District, and shall be paid from the Treasury thereof.

(4) THAT the Board of Education of the Central District be and hereby are given full authority and consent to contract for the education and transportation of (A) all the children of former districts #3, 6, and 7, (B) pupils of the 6th grade and above in #4, and (C) pupils of the 5th grade and above in #9.

The Chairman then stated that the voters were entitled to know, and would be interested in knowing, what progress the

Board of Education was making towards attaining the Central School. He thereupon outlined clearly and adequately the various steps that had been taken, and work accomplished. He touched on the organization of the Board the night of its election; their trip to Albany to establish friendly contact with the various officials with whom the Board must work, and to learn what assistance their experience and training would avail us guidance in preparing our curriculum and building plans; the Board's inspection of some 15 or 16 school plants, to learn both desirable and undesirable features, to use or avoid in our project; the careful and exhaustive investigation of a long list of architects, in order that the one selected be the best possible for the satisfactory solution of the problems peculiarly our District's, and announcing the Board's selection of Mr. Archibald F. Gilbert, 385 Fifth Avenue, New York City, as such architect; and the inspection by the Board of some eight proposed sites, also visited by the architect, and the approval of which the State Department has been asked. So comprehensive was Mr. Scheiber's exposition of the Board's activities, that, when asked, the other members had nothing to add, and the audience could think of no questions to further satisfy their curiosity.

There being no further business before the meeting, a motion for adjournment was made and carried.

Minutes of the Board Meeting
August 7, 1934

This meeting followed the first annual meeting of the School District held at

Adams Corners, and was for the purpose of considering additional business. The Clerk was directed to meet at once with the proper authorities at Peekskill and Shrub Oak in order to determine the tuition rates proposed for our high school pupils for the approaching term and also whether or not accommodation would be made for children from this District. The President reported an interview with Mr. Wagner regarding the possibility of the School District acquiring a part of the old Austin farm for a school site, and in which Mr. Wagner stated he would advise the Board on the next Sunday. The President also reported a communication to Dr. Hixon of the Buildings and Grounds Division of the State Education Department, asking that arrangements be made for the inspection of various proposed sites by that Department. Arrangements were made to meet with Architect Gilbert at 8:30 p.m. of the next Friday. By motion of the President, seconded by Mr. Tompkins, the District will pay the premium for surety Bonds for both the Collector and the Treasurer.

Minutes of the Board Meeting
August 10, 1934

This Board meeting included two major items. One was the arrangement for a census of the pupils in the various Little Red School House districts who would now be going to the Central School, and the other was continued discussion of the various features and of rough sketches of a proposed school building submitted by the architect.

The Board decided to meet at 10:00 a.m. the next morning (August 11) to look at

two additional sites. Mr. Scheiber reported a communication from the State Department announcing that their Dr. Essex would inspect all the proposed sites on Saturday afternoon at 1:00 p.m.

Minutes of the Board Meeting
August 15, 1934

In the afternoon the Board met with Dr. Essex at the Clerk's office. The location of various proposed sites were pointed out on a large scale map. following which the Board and Dr. Essex inspected those sites. Immediately after these inspections, the Board met at Mr. Scheiber's office at Tompkins Corners and discussed with Dr. Essex matters of curriculum and the required facilities for a school building. These matters were very thoroughly gone over and Dr. Essex indicated what he believed would meet with the approval of the State Department. He also outlined the procedure necessary to obtain the final approval by the State Department.

In the evening the Board met to discuss the need of selecting a qualified engineer to perform various services in connection with surveying such sites as might be approved by the State Department, in order that correct boundaries could be submitted to the voters at the time of their selection.

Among various other items discussed was the important issue of transportation, and the Clerk was instructed to request the prospective bus and taxi drivers to meet with the Board at the next meeting to discuss bus routes, insurance, inspections and related matters.

The question of selecting a satisfactory site for the proposed Central School was of course a question of primary importance. The Chairman of the Board, when approached by one of those desiring to sell a plot of land to the school, after examining it, was convinced that the beautiful 12 acre hillside plot offered by the Blaine Estates had much to recommend it.

He was even more convinced that it should receive careful consideration when he was able to persuade the owner in consideration of the probable increase in the value of the acreage which was retained to offer these 12 acres to the school district as a gift.

Sites: There was considerable discussion regarding the various sites in question and the respective easements the Board felt should be imposed on the immediately adjacent land. The consensus of opinion was that unless the owner agreed to certain restrictions on land surrounding the school site, his offer be rejected. The position of the Board was this; that the erection of a school would greatly enhance the value of the adjacent property, and that the District was therefore entitled to protection against undesirable uses of land adjacent to its school. The Clerk was directed to obtain from the surveyors boundaries and descriptions necessary for options on all proposed sites. The Clerk was further directed to request the use of the Grange Hall on October 13, at which time the voters of the District would vote on the Site and the Bond Issue.

The not easy task of persuading the taxpayers to support the Central School District proposal and to approve the proposed $200,000 bond issue had to be carried on. It should not be forgotten that Putnam Valley, like the rest of the country, was in the grip of a fearful depression and relentless inflation and its being urged to pass what was by far the largest bond issue had its problems. Many of the taxpayers and their parents had gone to the same little red school houses that their children were now attending, and their feeling was that if it was good enough for me and my father, it should be good enough for my children.

Also, the largest bond issue Putnam Valley had passed up to that time was a $60,000 bond issue passed by Putnam Valley, and other communities in differing amounts, during the Civil War to induce volunteers to enlist and be rewarded, therefore, by a cash incentive. Sad to say, it was not unusual for some of the bounty collectors to desert regiment after regiment, collecting a new bounty each time they enlisted in the next regiment. This

fact may come as an unpleasant surprise to people who are not acquainted with this fairly common custom during the Civil War.

I am mindful of Victor Hugo's Les Miserables in which the author devoted two full chapters in the middle of his book to describe the sewers of Paris. Therefore, following a classical example of literary digression, the space devoted to the bounty system for volunteers, which was in general practice at that time, is included because I feel that there might be some unfavorable reaction by some of the Putnam Valley readers unless it were made clear that this questionable practice did exist not only in Putnam Valley.

As was stated by historian Scharf, "This part of the history of the country is one in which few of its citizens can take much pride." Also, as reported in Naylor's excellent volume entitled Civil War Days in a Country Village, "It was not until some years later that the people realized that the bounty system had degraded the name of the American soldier."

Similarly, historian Naylor has stated that the first National Draft in October of 1863 demanded 110 men from our neighbors in Cortlandt Town. A $15,000 bond issue was voted to pay $300 bounties. The call for the meeting said it was "to raise money to procure substitutes for those who could not go if drafted on account of their families." 218 men were drawn from the lottery wheel, but 145 were discharged; 31 because of physical disabilities, 8 as the only sons of widows, 2 as the only support of parents, 6 were under age and 29 were aliens. Only 73 were held for service but none of them entered the Army. Of this number, 41 of them procured substitutes and 31 paid $300 commutation money to the government when exempted from war service.

## PUTNAM VALLEY APPROVES CENTRAL SCHOOL

For the numerous school district areas surrounding the Putnam Valley school area, Putnam Valley and its activity in connection with centralization was a matter of major interest.

A few out of the many scores of the particular headlines and editorials from the four local newspapers in the area which related to the Putnam Valley centralization project may be of interest.

> Our Congratulations (Putnam County Courier)
> It is a matter of congratulation to the future generations of Putnam Valley that the citizens of that town voted strongly for a centralized school district last Saturday. It means better educational facilities in the future for the children of that town to compare with any locality of the state. We want to compliment the excellent and unselfish work of the leaders in the movement which will assure a better education for the children of Putnam Valley. The success they have had as well as the worth of the effort they made.

> Putnam Valley Approves Central School
> Vote on Saturday was 190 to 72. Fourteen candidates to contest for five places on Board of Education this Saturday.

Central School District Trustees Elected
Israel Ben Scheiber was chosen President of Board of Education of new Central School District in Putnam Valley. Five Trustees were elected Saturday to inspect new schools.

Putnam Valley Central School Board Busy
It inspects many buildings. Receives many offers of sites. A fine building planned. Central structure will embody many modern features.

Cultivating Good Will
The centralizing of the school districts of Putnam Valley is not only going to greatly improve the educational advantages of the town, but is fostering a spirit of community interest that speaks for its future.

No other event in its century-old history has had the same effect of uniting its people for the civic, social and material welfare of that town and its people.

The new school board is one of vision. This is evidenced in the educational exhibition and entertainment it has planned for this week. It is to be held at the Canopus schoolhouse this Friday evening and on Saturday afternoon and evening.

It will bring the people together to cultivate and cement the good will of the community that the new school will serve.

In the centralizing of the Mahopac schools the people of those districts have a like opportunity in the building of their new school house to replace the five now in existence.

The united districts have selected a fine

personnel for its new school board. One that would be hard to improve upon. In fact, all of those mentioned for places upon the board were capable men, worthy of the confidence of the people who can produce such a list of men, who are willing to serve without compensation for such important duties, is indeed fortunate.

We hope that a like feeling which prevails in the neighboring town of Putnam Valley will follow the action of the board both in the selection of a site for the new high school and in the character of the new building.

Of course there will be differences of opinion on those subjects but those differences should be actuated as what is best for the children and the administration of the school after it is in operation.

## The Bond Issue

When it came to voting for the actual expenditure of money and the adoption of the $200,000 bond issue, understandable, there was a sharp difference of opinion as is evidenced by the following headlines:

Bond Issue Stirs Putnam Valley
Taxpayers argue school matters. Putnam Valley taxpayers debate central district project and two hundred thousand dollar bond issue. Personalities enter picture. Plan is defended and condemned.

Putnam Valley Taxpayer-Legions Backing New

> Educational Plan. Rout Opponents in Decisive Test.
> Turn "Rally" aimed to defeat $200,000 project into victory for sanity and for a better deal for Township's children.

The following newspaper item alerted the Board as to the necessity of actively and widely presenting all pertinent facts and figures:

> Putnam Valley is on the eve of voting on a $200,000 bond issue for a new school and it does not take many words to start a lively debate in that section. Organizations are pressing forward with resolutions of approval but from a distance it looks as though the voters are going to defeat the proposition.

As a result, the Chairman, at times accompanied by his colleagues on the Board visited the various local organizations and patiently presented the facts and figures to the different memberships. Also, as a result, in almost every instance, by the time these meetings had been completed, it was possible for Board of Education members to leave with a feeling that their presentation had been persuasive and that they could rely upon the support of the people whom they had addressed.

Also, the cooperation of the local newspapers was obtained, as appears from the following:

Vote the Bond Issue

As happens wherever public-spirited citizens endeavor to improve the lot of children, a selfish minority, enmeshed in bogs of inordinate self-sufficiency, undertakes to cloud issues with false and misleading information.

In Putnam Valley, Putnam County, where a substantial majority of qualified voters approved plans for the creation of a central school district, 'penny-wise and pound-foolish' taxpayers are motoring hither and yon trying to muster enough electors to vote against the bond issue necessary to provide funds for the project.

Parents' Association Backs School Bond Issue

Oscawana Colony backs new school in Putnam Valley. 100% in favor of centralized school building proposed there. Once, twice as much spent yearly on highways as for education.

Organizations Backing Putnam Valley School

Much interest has been created in Putnam Valley of late weeks by the proposal to build in the town a modern $200,000 central school. A bond issue of that amount is to be voted on next Saturday, October 13.

Present indications are that the proposition will win if all the organizations and civic leaders in the township that are now backing the new school continue their active support of the plan. Among those backing the new school proposition are the Putnam Valley Grange, the Putnam Valley Town Board, the two Parent-Teachers Associations, the Oscawana Colony, Inc. The Oscawana Lake Association is the only organization that is openly opposing the program.

State Approves Putnam Valley's $200,000 School Plan

Approval is subject to 2/3 vote of taxpayers. Board of Regents makes tentative decision after hearing Putnam Valley School Board and opposing groups. $200,000 cost of new building exceeds the 10% legal limitation, due to low assessments of property.

Putnam Valley, Be Independent! (Editorial) Next Saturday, October, 13, the people of the Town of Putnam Valley will be called upon to vote on a proposition of tremendous importance to the future welfare of the township. They will be asked to decide whether their educational facilities shall keep pace with the growth of the Township.

There should be no quibbling over whether a new central school is needed. That is self-evident. The fact that the Township now has to spend $16,000 a year to have its boys and girls of higher grades educated in outside schools is evidence that its present equipment is inadequate.

Expect Big Vote on Putnam Valley School Project $200,000 Bond Issue to be decided upon at spirited election today.

School Bond Issue Wins in Putnam Valley Taxpayers vote $200,000 school. Putnam Valley will get a modern school. New central school assured as result of special election Saturday. Large vote cast in Putnam Valley last Saturday. Total of 750 electors cast ballots, 431 For and 310 Against giving children a square educational deal. Means jobs for many.

The foregoing are a few of the many headlines which appeared in the local newspapers to announce the passing of the bond issue. However,

as indicated, headlines often tell a very incomplete story.

In the present issue, after much rejoicing on the part of most of the people in Putnam Valley, it became necessary to turn over to the bonding attorneys the necessary documents so that they could certify that the bond issue had been legally passed and was in proper condition for certification by the bonding attorneys to the purchasers of the bonds.

For this purpose, the bonding attorneys asked for some ten different affidavits and certified resolutions that the proceedings had all been regular and in accordance with the law, and in particular, that the meetings called in connection with the voting on the bond issue were all in legal compliance and had been properly advertised.

After some delay, having collected the necessary papers, I took them down to the bonding attorneys who looked them over very carefully, and then to my horror stated that there appeared to have been a clerical oversight in the bonding

attorneys' office and that three publications were issued when four were required. When I asked about the situation, I was definitely advised that it would be necessary to re-advertise the bond issue, meetings and proceedings.

To put it mildly, the thought of having to start all over again was more than I could bear. However, there seemed to be no alternative and so, that night and the following night I tossed around restlessly until on the second morning it occured to me that in connection with the keeping of the Putnam Valley taxpayers advised about the important facts connected with the centralization and the bond issue, I had issued and circulated four different news letters called "The School News of Putnam Valley," each from four to eight pages in size, and that these undoubtedly must have had the date and the place of the holding of the various public meetings, including the bond issue meeting. By 9:00 a.m. that morning, with copies of these news letters and an affidavit of publication which I had promptly prepared, I waited for the office of

the bonding attorneys to open, and as soon as it did, and one of the attorneys had made his appearance, I hopefully showed him the news letters which he looked over so very slowly and so very carefully before he finally said, "This will do it." It did, and I have rarely been more relieved and happy than when I heard these words.

Work Progresses on New Putnam Valley School
Seek TERA Funds for Grading at New School
Application is made for TERA Funds for grading the athletic grounds.

Part of a Good Neighbor (Editorial)
The Board of Education of Putnam Valley sends 75 pupils to Peekskill School for tuition. They are conveyed in two large buses over the Oregon Trail and the Board, by formal resolution, complained bitterly over the unsafe condition of that part of the Trail in Westchester County.

Besides the school buses, this piece of highway carries considerable traffic from Putnam County to trade in the Peekskill stores and to and from the Central trains.

For sound business reasons, this highway should at least be repaired and placed in a safe condition. It would be a good neighborly gesture to the people of Putnam Valley to improve the highway. It has needed attention for years.

Putnam Valley School Building Going Up Fast
Excavation has been completed within two weeks. Water supply found adequate. Property in vicinity will be restricted. Board of Education preparing curriculum.

Putnam Valley School to get $19,895 Athletic Field

Approval of project received from county TERA director. George B. Sackrider re-elected trustee for five-year term. Property in vicinity of school site restricted.

Grading of the grounds and the construction of an athletic field at an estimated cost of $19,895, as a TERA project on the site of the new Putnam Valley School has been approved and will be started soon, according to a report made at the annual meeting of the Board of Education Tuesday night.

George B. Sackrider was re-elected a trustee for a term of five years. Little interest was shown by the taxpayers and but few voted in the election held at the Grange Hall, Adams Corners.

Israel Ben Scheiber, president of the Board, stated that application had been made to George Conrad, Putnam County TERA director for the grading of grounds and construction of an athletic field. As soon as other TERA work in the town is completed, this project will be started.

It was stated that the auditorium of the new school would be a community center and available for motion pictures, lectures, entertainments, and concerts.

## The Strike and Other Problems

Of course, there are some things a headline can never reveal. As, for instance, "Strike Ties Up Putnam Valley School...Carpenters and Laborers in Disagreement over Erection of Scaffold,"

merely indicates a strike broke out, and the story that follows it only states that after some efforts by the President of the Board, he succeeded in settling it.

What happened was that the President received a phone call in his New York City office and was advised that all work had stopped. His time table showed that he could take a train to Peekskill in about forty minutes.

He then called Police Officer White and asked him to meet him at the Peekskill Station when the train arrived, and to telephone Judge Clement Gorler and to drive him to the school construction site, if necessary, which was done. On the way, Officer White told the writer that all the men had actually stopped working when asked to do so by the leader of the local union, and that the men were sitting around the construction shanty playing cards.

The writer had also heard that the union leader had a quick and roung temper, and so when they arrived at the school site, he asked the officer to wait at the town road where the police car

was out of sight of the shanty, while he went up to where the workers were sitting around and joined their leader.

First, he reminded the union leader that the school had to be ready for use in less than two months. The answer he received was a shrug of the shoulder and the statement that it was not his problem. He then reminded the union leader that the contractor under his agreement with the Board of Education, although obliged to use local union men, could in his sole discretion substitute them with non-union men if the union men slowed down the work or delayed construction. And, also, practically none of his union men were from Putnam Valley. The carpenter leader apparently construed this as a threat and loundly and abusively told the writer that he "didn't have to take any threats from nobody," and shook his fist at the writer and angrily threatened to assault him.

At this point, the writer called Officer White who had heard and seen what had gone on and preferred charges against the carpenter leader. As a result, the writer, the carpenter, and the officer

were soon facing Judy Gorley at the hearing room of his home.

Then, to everybody's surprise, the Judge, whose granddaughter was anxiously waiting for the school to be finished, and who probably had unofficially heard all about the strike, and in any event, did not approve of playing cards on the school grounds, without swearing a witness, proceeded to give the much quieter carpenter a stern lecture and wound up by sentencing him to 90 days in the county jail.

The writer, taken by surprise, asked the Judge for a fifteen minute intermission in the proceedings and with the police officer and the carpenter, all went out to the front porch where the carpenter kept sputtering, "They can't do this to me," while he was being reminded that it had been done, and that the Putnam County jail, even then, was a very unpleasant place to be kept in.

To make a long story short, the dispute was finally resolved and then the president had the not easy task of persuading the Judge to cancel and

withdraw his sentence.

An interesting incident occured some two weeks later when the writer received a phone call from the carpenter chief to the effect that it looked like another strike would break out because the masons were working on masonite board which could be cut with a saw or chisel and therefore was carpenter's work, and so the carpenters should not be blamed if there was a strike.

After getting a promise that there would be no strike, the writer came up the following day and was happily able to work out an agreement whereby each of the trades did half of the masonite work in dispute.

The writer has sometimes suspected that the occurance before the Judge had become public and had a beneficial effect in the completion of the Putnam Valley Central School within nine or ten months from its ground-breaking.

Putnam Valley Wins Battle in Light Rate Fight 37% Slash in Rates to School District is Secured. P.S.C. Demands Report

Included in the considerable list of pro-

blems to be resolved in connection with the Putnam Valley Central School project was a dispute with the New York State Electric and Gas Corporation which, in the opinion of the President of the Putnam Valley Board of Education, was seriously overcharging the Putnam Valley School District, as well as some twenty communities of which Putnam Valley was a part. After some negotiations which did not result in the satisfactory adjustment, the Putnam Valley Board of Education, at the suggestion of its President, requested the Public Service Commission to investigate the rates being charged in the town of Putnam Valley, with the result that the Commission issued an order to the New York State Gas and Electric Corporation directing it to file an answer to the complaint.

This resulted in continued negotiations, as a result of which Putnam Valley received offers of settlement, which would have reduced the school tax rate first by 20%, then by 27%, and finally by 37%, which was accepted.

This applied to all of the schools in the

Harlem Valley division of the New York State Gas and Electric Corporation, which included some 23 communities.

Putnam Valley Speeds Central School
Ceremonies will be held on June 1 at site of the $200,000 education building on Lake Oscawana Road. Justice William F. Bleakley principal guest speaker. Many invitations sent to notables elsewhere. Event to be memorable.

Putnam Valley to Dedicate New School
Special program prepared for next Saturday night in celebration of completed modern school. Parents are invited to inspect new building. Ray P. Snyder, head of rural education, to give address.

Unique equipment features new central school building. Adequate for 200 pupils. Movable desks and chairs especially designed for Putnam Valley. Library, workshop, kitchen, gymnasium, auditorium are features of school.

Cornerstone of New Putnam Valley Central School Laid Saturday
Impressive ceremonies witnessed by 200. Mrs. Emily Perry, aged 93, places first cement. Justice Bleakley gives address. President Scheiber extends welcome. Music by Haldane School Band.

Putnam Valley's New School Building Ready for Partial Occupancy September 9.

Putnam Valley Board Asks All to Fly Old Glory on Monday. Teachers of New Putnam Valley School Eager to Start. Principal Alexander and Wife Entertain Staff at Luncheon at Their Home.

New 'Put' Valley School is Opened Auspiciously
Members of Board of Education and Parents are present this morning. 150 pupils enrolled. Motion pictures are taken.

Another milestone in the history of Putnam Valley was recorded this morning with the opening of the new Putnam Valley Central School. Teachers and trustees began to arrive before 8:00 a.m. to see that everything was in readiness for the great event. Soon the buses began to arrive with their loads of enthusiastic children who were met at the foot of the hill by Bruce Adams, one of the Trustees, and escorted up the hill to the school.

Israel Ben Scheiber, President of the Board, arrived early and spent the morning at the school. "What pleases me most," he said, "is to see so many smiling faces. Parents, children, visitors, teachers all seem happy."

We Extend our Congratulations (Editorial)
The people of Putnam Valley are happy over the opening of their new centralized school on Monday. They made a gala day of it by the visits of many parents and residents of that town. We extend our congratulations for it marks a new era in the education of their children, one worthy of commemoration by all concerned in consolidation of the country school districts and the erection of a building worthy of the cause of education. It gives the children of Putnam Valley the same opportunity for an education that the other towns of the county are enjoying.

It being the feeling of the Board that the parents should definitely feel comfortable in the school, the Board suggested to the parents and

the teachers that a Parent-Teacher Association should be formed, and this was done.

Taxpayers Point of View

> Putnam Valley School Tax Lowered
> Israel Ben Scheiber, President of the Board of Education in Putnam Valley, has announced that the school tax for the coming year will be approximately $1.00 per thousand lower than it was this year. The exact rate cannot be determined until the assessments have been completed. The school tax this year was $17.89 per thousand.

In a community which at that time and even now, some forty years later, had little or no significant tax base and which, in addition thereto, had had many thousand of acres removed from its tax role in order to form Fahnestock Park, a large recreational facility for the use of not only Putnam Valley, but of any and all the residents of the state of New York, a question of taxes has understandably been one of major concern.

I feel therefore that the reaction of the taxpayers of Putnam Valley as set forth by the President of Oscawana Country Club may be of interest.

> Last year when the question of raising the $200,000 bond issue came up the Board of Education submitted figures showing what increase it deemed necessary in our school taxes in

order to raise this fund. Their estimate was a couple of dollars per $1,000 assessed valuation. As President of the Oscawana Colony Club, Inc., and as a public accountant by profession, I checked and double-checked their figures and found them to be $100% correct. I then came out strongly in favor of the bond issue. The chief opponent...came out with a printed circular which was mailed to all taxpayers contradicting our figures and telling us that even in the first year, our school taxes would be increased to $17 per $1,000 assessed valuation.

Now, let us look into the figures and records, and let the taxpayers be the sole judges as to whose figures were right and whose figures were wrong. In 1934 I received a school tax bill which was the highest in the history of Putnam Valley. That bill was $11.35 per $1,000. In 1935 with our beautiful new school in operation, I received a bill for $12.76 per $1,000, or $ .14 per $100. Now you can render your own fair verdict.

A few taxpayers were complaining that their property had gone up in assessed valuation about 10%. Let me tell you that our club's property has also been increased by 100%, yet I am not going to put the blame on the school or on the Board of Education, because I know that the Board never had, and never will have, anything to do with placing values on property. That function belongs to the Board of Assessors. They only have the right to increase or decrease assessed valuation. The properties that were increased were no doubt underassessed, and now that we are making improvements in the town, they should pay fair proportion.

Now, let us see what the new school did for the taxpayer of Putnam Valley. It has put

our town on the map as a progressive and education-loving community. More people are anxious to come out and settle here. I notice that several summer residences are already being remodeled into all-year homes. Our wise real estate brokers are using the new school as a strong selling point. They know that people before purchasing a home or a home site, look for places where they have good schools, roads, and clean local politics. Remember, the more new settlers we have, the higher the assessed valuation will be, and the lower the rate of taxation.

Although our school is open for a short time as yet, and the children have not had the opportunity to enjoy their school long, I wager you that if you ask the kiddies' opinion whether they would like to go back to the one room, old-fashioned schools, they would all say no. Niether would the P.T.A. send them back to the old fire trap school. And all this for a mere cost of only $1.41 per $1,000. 85% of our population is paying taxes on a $1,000 or less assessment, so that the majority, by paying an increase of one dollar and change, are receiving all the benefits as specified above, and probably more that I have neglected to mention.

Truth always wins out!

## BOARD OF EDUCATION DID THOROUGH JOB OF PLANNING

Behind the pleasant headline, Board of Education did Thorough Job in Planning for New School, lies many long months of hard work by the Board of Education, numerous trips to Albany, and inspection of various central schools, in the hope of benefitting by their experiences.

Above all, our Board was privileged to work with the cooperative and experienced head of the Buildings and Grounds Division of the New York State Education Department and the Board's highly competent architect.

However, the final approval of the plans as carefully worked out by the Board and its architect and the State School and Grounds Division, on the basis of what was finally believed to be in the best interests of the children and community, still had to have the final approval of the Board of Regents.

Having heard of the tendency of the Board

of Regents to make hurried changes in the plans submitted to it in the interests of economy, the Minutes of the September 8, 1934, Meeting of the Board read that:

> The President called the attention of the Board to the fact that the State Department might seek to make changes in the plans to be submitted. Accordingly, the following resolution was offered by the President and seconded by the Clerk:
>
> RESOLVED: that the Board of Education shall not approve any alterations in the plans of a proposed school building submitted to the State Department as outlined by representatives of the Buildings and Grounds Division; and that, if necessary, the Board will appear before the Commissioner's committee and defend said plans before said committee.

As feared, after flipping the pages of the plans for three or four minutes, the Chairman of the Board of Regents suggested some changes in the interest of economy that would have cut the heart out of the plans, which had been so carefully prepared. The writer can still remember his hardly controlled impatience arising at seeing two years of hard work so repeatedly amended. The plans on which the Board had spent long hours and days and

weeks were hardly glanced at before the recommendation of damaging revisions. The President then reminded them that for our community this was a very important project, and that their recommendations, coming now after the careful work and final approval based on the acceptance of the suggestions for changes made by their own Buildings and Grounds Committee were not acceptable to our community or to our Board of Education because they were "penny-wise and pound foolish." The writer is reminded, as no doubt Bruce Adams will be, that at this point, our architect tugged at my coat, afraid that my remarks might antagonize the Regents.

However, after a private conference, they advised us that they would meet with us again, and at the President's request, they agreed that the meeting would be in New York City and not in Albany.

On the adjourned date, they sent word out to us that the plans had been approved as submitted, and that no additional meeting was necessary.

12 Acre School Site is Well Adapted to Purpose

Modern School, Fine Roads, Draw People to 'Put' Valley; Population Trebled in 15 Years

Health Instruction Kept in Mind in Planning New School Building
Public Health Association of Putnam Valley provides splendid program for 200 members and guests through efforts of Mrs. Paul Schmittman's Committee

Over 50 Teeth Pulled Free at Putnam Valley School

The School Board was fortunate in having the assistance of a dedicated nurse, Grace Hillyer, with whom it worked actively. From one of her reports, it appeared that the teeth of the Putnam Valley children were badly in need of attention. Also, there was no dentist practicing in the town, and since no budget funds were available, the President of the Board of Education approached August Heckscher, a kindly philanthropist, and persuaded him to donate a sufficient sum to establish and equip a health unit which included a dental clinic, all of which is set forth in the following newspaper reports.

Heckscher Gives $2,000 for School Dental Clinic
Elderly philanthropist donates complete outfit to Putnam Valley Central School. Many children reported in need of dental care.

It should be mentioned also that the President of the Board was able to persuade the father of three of the children attending the school, Dr. Harry Selden, a distinguished surgeon-dentist, to take an active interest in the formation of a dental clinic and to persuade some of his New York City colleagues to look after the teeth of the children on a volunteer basis by regular weekly visits.

> New School Fills Need for a Community Center
> The people of Putnam Valley are putting their new school building to use as a social center for the town, besides for school functions. This is a fine thing for the community. They have a community room which is used extensively by the various local organizations and now the Putnam Valley Free Library will have a room in the building in which to operate the library.
>
> Many New Features in Putnam Valley Athletic Stadium
> Built for recreational needs of entire community as well as of student body.
>
> Trustees Grant CCC Camps and Three Churches Permission to Use Gymnasium
>
> Centennial Worship Attended by 250
> The Putnam Valley Centennial community interfaith service was held in the stadium of the Putnam Valley Central School yesterday morning under a blue sky with a warm sun shining down. Large American flags were flying from the back of the stadium, the sides of the bandstand, and at the entrance to the school grounds.

About 250 residents and visitors were present, and all ages were represented from tots to Mrs. Emily Perry who recently observed her 98th birthday. Other pioneers present included Mrs. Sarah Perry, 91, and Austin Russell, 83.

Seated on the bandstand were the members of the clergy, the speaker, the Junior Choir of the Canopus Methodist Church, wearing white surplices and black ties and robes, the Putnam Valley Glee Club, and the Salvation Army trumpet trio.

Putnam Valley's Free Library is Organized
Fifteen residents vote to establish association at new school.

Putnam Valley's first free public library had its origin through the interests of Mrs. Rhea Kimberley Johnson, who founded the library and for some time maintained it in her home. When it outgrew the space, the school consented to the library using one of the school rooms for one year which, however, ultimately stretched out to five years until after repeated notice that the school had to take over this space for school purposes, it did so. In this connection, it should be noted that the school voted an annual payment of $500 for the library, and its President, who was also Town Counsel, persuaded the Putnam Valley Town Board to make a simi-

lar annual donation. It was also possible for the President and the Secretary of the Board of Education on a trip to Albany to obtain for the library a provisional charter.

Putnam Valley Pupils Present "The Mikado"

"Pinafore" Thrills Large Putnam Valley Audience

Among the many cultural activities which were made possible by the attractive auditorium of Putnam Valley's new central school were a series of musical events under the auspices of the Putnam Valley Friends of Music and Art. These events included several symphony concerts which were held outdoors in the newly constructed stadium, and on several other occasions, chamber music concerts and other musical events. It may be of interest that these concerts were reported in the New York Times and that the stadium in which they were held was built at no cost to taxpayers, but as a result of funds solicited by the President of the Board of Education from people who had generously responded.

Some of these concerts, in headline form,

were reported as follows:

Putnam Valley School Holds Cultural Program

First in Series of Three Concerts Saturday Night
Putnam Valley Board of Education sponsors programs in cooperation with WPA

Symphonic Concert in Putnam Valley
Carmen Reuben to be soloist. Second in series of federal WPA music projects will be given this Saturday evening.

Putnam Valley Hears WPA Orchestra
Augusta Scheiber is guest soloist. 250 attend.

300 Attend Concert by Dorothy Minty, Augusta Scheiber

Albany Orchestra to Play in Putnam Valley
F. Charles Adler will conduct orchestra at the school stadium. Augusta Scheiber will be soloist

Perole String Quartet Appears Tomorrow Night at Putnam Valley
Augusta Scheiber Pianist, and Murray Shapinsky, Bass, will assist noted chamber music group in concert at Central School

Final Concert at Putnam Valley School
Final concert will be given on Saturday. Dorothy Minty will appear as violin soloist with Westchester Philharmonic Orchestra

To complete the picture of this eventful year, the following headlines may be of interest.

Kindergarten is Important Part of School System

Putnam Valley Pupils Taught How to Drive and Fix Autos

Putnam Valley School Busy Place for Adult Night Classes

Putnam Valley Teachers to Get 10% Pay Boost

170 at Testimonial Dinner for Putnam Valley School Board

300 at Graduation Exercises Held in Putnam Valley
Five graduated at first commencement in school. Marc McClosky, speaker.

## THE MINUTES

Against the somewhat limited headline background of the four area newspapers then functioning in the Putnam Valley area, a small part of the more detailed and helpful record of its activities kept by the Board, may be of interest and will now be presented.

Minutes of the Board Meeting
October 13, 1934

> The meeting was called to order by Mr. Israel Ben Scheiber, President of the Board of Education, who called for the election of some qualified voter to act as Chairman of the Meeting. By motion of Mr. Paul Schmittman, seconded by Mr. Martin Stryker, Mr. Esrael Ben Scheiber was unanimously elected to act as Chairman. F. Bruce Adams, Clerk of the District, acted as Clerk of the Meeting.
>
> Shall the Board of Education acquire by Gift the following described piece or parcel of land.

Board minutes like newspaper headlines often do not reflect interesting and at times important facts as is shown by the following facts.

In connection with the donation of the twelve acres from the land owned by the Blaine

Estate for school purposes, it was ascertained that it would be necessary to release this and surrounding acreage from a mortgage in the sum of $7,950 held by one of the Putnam Valley residents.

The President, after some negotiations, was able to convince the holder of the mortgage that the remaining land, over 100 acres, was adequate security for the payment of the mortgage and that the school site should therefore be released from the mortgage. However, shortly before the closing of the transaction involving the deeding of the school site, the holder of the mortgage changed his mind, which placed the Board in a most embarrassing position.

The President thereupon approached N. Dain Sons Company, a local dealer in lumber and building materials, and after considerable discussion was able to persuade its Board of Directors to pay off the holder of the mortgage and to release the twelve acre site while retaining by assignment a mortgage on the remaining property. This was in

consideration of the promise by the Board and the school contractor that the needed lumber and building materials would be bought from the Dain firm if its prices did not exceed those of competing firms.

After this, the President slept for a day and a night.

> Appropriation: That the Board of Education is hereby authorized to construct upon the said site a new Central School Building, to grade and improve said site, to purchase the necessary furniture, fixtures, and equipment for said building and site, and to expend for all of said purposes an amount not exceeding $200,000; that a tax is hereby voted for said purposes in such amount, upon the taxable property of the District, as provided by the State Education Law, to be collected in annual installments in such years and in such amounts as may be determined by the Board of Education; that the Board of Education is hereby further authorized to issue bonds of the District in anticipation of said tax in an amount not exceeding $200,000; and the Board of Education is further authorized to raise by tax upon the taxable property of said District such sum or sums as shall be necessary to pay each of such bonds and evidences of indebtedness as they mature, and also to pay any and all interest thereon as the same shall become due.

> Qualifications: The Chairman then read

the qualifications of voters as set forth in Section 203 of the Education Law, and at the conclusion of the reading, announced that the Board had prepared printed ballots for recording the vote on the proposition to be submitted to the voters, as the notice of the call of the Meeting provided that the vote thereon would be by ballot.

Inspectors: The Chairman then requested nominations for Inspectors of Election. Motion was made and unanimously carried that the Chairman appoint Inspectors, as and when needed. The Chairman thereupon appointed Mr. Martin Stryker, Mrs. Garrett Cochrane, Mrs. Jessie Lawrence, and Mrs. Ruth Adams as Inspectors of Election, all qualified voters of the District.

Motion for Proposition: Miss Grace Hillyer moved the adoption by the voters of the proposition set forth in the notice of the call for the Meeting and as printed on the ballots, which was duly seconded by Mr. Garrett V. Cochrane, with the unanimous assent of all the qualified voters present at the time.

Ballot No. 1: The Chairman suggested and requested a motion that Ballot No. 1 be given to Mrs. Emily Perry, who in a few days would celebrate her 93rd birthday, and was conceded the oldest voter in the district. Such motion was offered, seconded, and unanimously carried.

Ballots Counted: The voting proceeded in a quiet and orderly manner all afternoon and evening until 9:00 p.m., at which time, the polls were closed. No voters were challenged. The ballot box was then unsealed and the ballots taken

therefrom by the Inspectors of Election, who thereupon carefully sorted the "Yeses" from the "Noes." The ballots were then counted, and the Inspectors of Election reported the following:

| | |
|---|---|
| Total Number Voting | 745 |
| In Favor of Proposition | 431 |
| Against the Proposition | 310 |
| Void Ballots | 3 |
| Blank Ballots | 1 |

Minutes of the Board Meeting
September 15, 1934

Bond Issue: The Board discussed with the visitors present the necessity and ways and means of enlightening the Township regarding the proposed Bond Issue. The President outlined the activities of the Board and its accomplishments to date. Those present indicated a keen desire to assist the Board in its work, and offered to do their bit in working for the Bond Issue.

Minutes of the Board Meeing
September 16, 1934

All the members of the Board of Education were present at a protest meeting at Lake Oscawana, called by Mr. John F. Kuhn, newly elected President of the Oscawana Lake Association. The meeting was called for 2:00 p.m., and broke up about 6:00 p.m. Mr. Scheiber presented the facts in favor of the School Project and the Bond Issue. This was done in a clear, intelligent, and forceful manner.

Those who spoke in opposition to the project were Mr. Kuhn, Mr. Youngling, and Mr. Dwer.

Other speakers in favor of the School Plan were Mr. Blackman, Mr. White, Mr. Burns, Mr. Knapp and Mr. Singer.

Minutes of the Board Meeting
September 21, 1934

Misc.: The Board discussed the necessity of informing the public regarding the proposed issuance of $195,000 worth of Bonds. The President suggested that a pamphlet be issued and sent through the mail, together with a series of newspaper articles in connection therewith.

Minutes of the Board Meeting
September 27, 1934

Bond Attorneys: The matter of selecting a Bond Attorney was discussed. The Clerk related a conversation he had had with former County Attorney Willis Ryder of Carmel, who stated that without the services of recognized Bond Attorneys, it would be next to impossible to float a bond issue. The President stated that he was informed this service would cost about $200. By motion of Mr. Tompkins, seconded by the Clerk, the following resolution was adopted: RESOLVED, that the President of the Board be and hereby is authorized to secure the services of a recognized firm of Bond Attorneys in connection with the floating of the proposed Bond Issue.

Minutes of the Board Meeting
October 27, 1934

Title Insurance: There was discussion as to the advisability of protecting the District by insuring the title to the 12 acre school site, donated by the Blaine Estates,

Inc., and accepted by the voters at the special election held on the 13th. While an examination of the title as reflected by the records on file at the County Seat showed the same to be clear, it was felt that the unfounded fears expressed by some of the opponents of the project should be definitely quelled, and that title insurance should be purchased. By motion of Mr. Adams, seconded by Mr. Tompkins, the President was empowered to procure title insurance for the school site.

Bonds: As to the inspection of various forms required to be filled out in connection with preparations for floating the bonds for the project, there was discussion as to how long a term they should run, and also as to whether or not it would be advisable to arrange the payments of principal so that, with the interest, the yearly total would remain approximately constant. Although no decision was reached, the consensus of opinion was that such a plan would be superior to paying off equal yearly amounts of principal, with the interest charges highest the first year, and diminishing thereafter.

Minutes of the Board Meeting
November 17, 1934

Plans: The purpose of the meeting was to go over the building plans with Dr. Hixson and discuss various points of information preparatory to going before the Board of Regents for their approval of the plans. Dr. Hixson outlined the probable procedure before the Board, and several points of view its members might take.

He stated, however, that he was prepared to defend the plans, and doubted serious opposition.

Materials: Architect Gilbert suggested that the time was drawing close for certain details of construction to be determined, such as the type of brick, windows, trim, etc. At Mr. Scheiber's suggestion, the Board will meet at Mr. Gilbert's office on December 3 to inspect a display of samples to be arranged by the Architect. The Board at the same time will doubtless visit the Architects' Institute on Park Avenue.

Regents: At about 2:30 p.m. the Board, together with Messrs. Gilbert and Hixson, appeared before the Board of Regents. Dr. Hixson had outlined our program. When we were called in, Mr. William Wallin, Chairman of the Regents Board, announced that our program had finally been approved without changes.

Minutes of the Board Meeting
November 30, 1934

Entertainment: Addressing the Board and the various members of the P.T.A. present, Mr. Scheiber suggested that an entertainment of some kind be organized. He felt, and the other members of the Board concurred, that the Board of Education was too distant from the school children and that a social gathering would permit each to become acquainted with the other, thus establishing a more intimate relation between the Board and the pupils. He pointed out that the Board had been, still was, and would be very much occupied with the building program, and that he and the Board would appreciate anything the P.T.A. and other individuals might do to

arrange a program to accomplish the purpose outlined. All those present approved such a purpose and offered to assist in its accomplishment.

Misc.: Various phases of the building project were discussed, particularly in relation to the floor plans and location of rooms. It was suggested that the Clerk and the Treasurer check up on the current year's expenditures and determine, if possible, what balance might be expected for use on the building project.

Minutes of the Board Meeting
December 22, 1934

Approval of Plans: Architect A.F. Gilbert presented for the Board's consideration a complete set of large scale and detail plans of the proposed school. These the Board scrutinized minutely and with great satisfaction, for they reflected to perfection many hours, days, and months of careful study and exhaustive searching for the best, most fitting, and most complete school facilities sorely needed by the community. Particularly pleasing was the fine work of the architect in translating the need into a building of simple yet dignified proportions, harmonizing with its surroundings, yet obviously complete in every detail. The sketches of the interior showed rare taste: being immensely attractive, yet lacking frills and flourishes costly to install, expensive to maintain and tiresome with long acquaintance. It was with evident pleasure the Board unanimously passed the following resolution:

RESOLVED: that plan "G" (Rev.) of a School Building for the Putnam

Valley Central School District, and submitted by Mr. A.F. Gilbert, Architect to the said District, be and hereby is formally approved by this Board of Education, of said District; AND, further, THAT this Board congratulate Mr. Gilbert for the excellence of his drawings, which reflect rare ability and conscientious effort.

Minutes of the Board Meeting
January 20, 1935

Artesian Well: Bids from several well drillers were considered by the Board. That of Matthews and Eder was found to be low and since their reputation was found eminently satisfactory, the following resolution offered by Mr. Tompkins and seconded by Mr. Sackrider was adopted:

RESOLVED: that the proposal of Matthews and Eder for the drilling of an artesian well in accordance with the specifications of the engineers, Krey and Hunt, be and hereby is accepted; and that said Matthews and Eder proceed immediately with this work.

Curriculum: The President called to the attention of the Board the necessity of preparing a curriculum and program of study for the approaching school term. The matter was discussed at some length. It was suggested and approved that the assistance of Messrs. Markle, Scott, Lindsey and Griffen, Principals at Cold Spring, Peekskill, Shrub Oak, and Yorktown Heights respectively be solicited. By motion of Mr. Sackrider, seconded by Mr. Tompkins, the Clerk was directed to request each of these principals to make a study of our problem and submit in writing their re-

spective solutions; and, further, that their recompense for the time and effort necessary be $25.00 each.

Misc.: The formal application for setting up the T.E.R.A. Project to construct an athletic field was approved and signed. Various items to be incorporated in a questionnaire to be submitted to prospective bidders were discussed and approved. It was further decided that bids to be solicited be advertised in local papers. It was further decided that the matter of floating bonds be pressed.

Minutes of the Board Meeting
February 9, 1935

Plans and Specifications: The Architect presented the final plans and specifications which had been approved by the State Department. Everything was most satisfactory, the working drawings seemed complete and of great detail. Considerable time was spent by the Board going over with the Architect the alternates, of which there were fifty. Most of these were to permit better construction, while a few major ones would reduce costs to keep within appropriations.

Bonds: The Board unanimously reaffirmed its intention to proceed with the sale of bonds, and adopted Plan #12 submitted by Treasurer Garret V. Cochrane. This plan will permit the payment of interest and the amortization of principal in as nearly equal yearly total amounts as possible, over a twenty-year period.

Contractors: The Clerk was instructed to send invitations to bid to a list of

thirty-three contractors. It was also decided that each contractor bidding submit answers to a questionnaire prepared by Mr. Scheiber; and that, in addition to invitation bids, advertisements be inserted in the Star, News, Democrat, and Courier.

Motions: The following motions were made and unanimously carried: (1) THAT the President be empowered to proceed with the sale of District Bonds, in amount of $195,000, to be amortized according to Plan #12 of the Treasurer; (2) THAT each of the thirty-three contractors mentioned and discussed be invited to bid on the construction project; (3) THAT advertisements soliciting bids on the construction project be placed in the Peekskill Evening Star, the Peekskill Highland Democrat, the Putnam County News, and the Putnam County Courier; (4) THAT the Clerk receive all bids on the construction project until noon, March 2, 1935, AND that said bids be opened on said date in the afternoon; and (5) THAT the bills as audited by paid by the Treasurer as authorized over the signatures of the President and the Clerk.

Minutes of the Board Meeting
February 23, 1935

Depositories: The Board discussed the advisability of splitting the deposit of the bond money among the four Putnam County banks: $40,000 each at Cold Spring, Carmel and Brewster; and $75,000 at Mahopac. The Clerk was authorized to make inquiry at these banks as to deposit guarantees, interest, etc. Also, to arrange with the Mahopac Bank for bond

payments through its City affiliate.

Curriculum: Mr. Franklin Markle, Principal of the Cold Spring schools, was present at the Board's invitation, and discussed for the better part of two hours the very important matter of curriculum. Mr. Markle showed a wealth of knowledge in this subject; his outline of advances made in teaching methods, and the best practices of the day, met with the unanimous approval of all the Board members. Mr. Markle was warmly thanked for attending the meeting, for his remarks were indeed valuable in helping the Board in its efforts to give the community not just a fine school building, but an enriched, beneficial, far reaching educational programs.

Minutes of the Board Meeting
March 9, 1935

Construction Bids: The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by the President, who announced that the Board was prepared to open sealed proposals submitted in connection with the construction of the school; that each bid would be publicly announced; but that the decision of the Board would be delayed pending a complete tabulation of the proposals offered and a thorough investigation of the successful bidders, and the acceptance by the Board of Surety Bonds to be submitted by the bidders. The Chairman thereupon sorted the bids and opened same. Those, in turn, were passed on to Mr. Gilbert, who read the contents thereof.

Bond Issue: This being the time and place advertised for the sale and consideration of bids received for the $195,000 coupon School Bonds of said Central School District No. 3, the meeting was called to

order by the President of said Board.

Minutes of the Board Meeting
March 16, 1935

Equipment: The Board had an interesting and instructive discussion with Mr. Mullwitz, a school equipment expert from New Rochelle. Mr. Mullwitz indicated a thorough knowledge of the subject and clearly demonstrated his ability to provide the district's equipment needs at the lowest possible cost. Since this matter was in need of immediate attention, in order that best prices would be available by "shopping around," by motion of Mr. Adams, seconded by Mr. McAdie, Mr. Mullwitz was unanimously appointed by the Board to act as purchasing agent for the Board on a commission basis of 6%. Preceeding the adoption of this motion, Mr. Gilbert was consulted, inasmuch as the Architect is often employed by Boards of Education to do this work. Mr. Gilbert stated he was not anxious to be so employed; that the Architect's standard fee for such work was 10%, and that he gladly recommended the equipment feature be handled in this manner. Mr. Mullwitz promised he would begin his work immediately, but that final selection would be made by the Board.

Minutes of the Board Meeting
March 23, 1935

Cupola: In considering various items necessary to bring the cost of the building within the appropriation, the Architect and the Board were in disagreement on two items only. The Board favored the installation of the oil buring equipment and the elimination of the cupola.

The Architect took an opposite stand, favoring the cupola in place of the oil burning equipment. The omission of the cupola was regretted by the Board, but made mandatory by the lack of funds, and its decision to install oil burners in a hillside building subject to winds and cold had to be made even at the sacrifice of the aesthetic cupola.

Minutes of the Board Meeting
March 27, 1935

General Bid Accepted: WHEREAS, The Henry W. Streeter Corporation has submitted the lowest bid on the general construction of the Putnam Valley Central School, therefore be it RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of said Central District hereby accepts the proposal of said Henry W. Streeter Corporation, pending the approval of the changes in the plans by the State Department of Education and pending the approval of the Board of the Surety Bond to be submitted by said Corporation.

It was pointed out that some of the alternates in addition to the based bids indicated might be accepted, thereby increasing the amount of the final contract.

Minutes of the Board Meeting
March 30, 1935

Athletic Field: The matter of getting the T.E.R.A. job underway was discussed. It was pointed out by Mr. Ridgway that in view of the possible need of additional fill, this could be supplied by excavating the roadway approaching the school building. Mr. Ridgway also reported that he and Mr. W.H. Tompkins had gone over the

athletic field project quite thoroughly and that necessary stakes for elevation and lines were in place; and that except for tools and equipment, the project was ready. He also suggested that if a competent dry wall builder was available, such a wall could be constructed under contract at a cost not exceeding the materials necessary for a wet wall. He further recommended that a dry wall would be preferable and suggested that the Board seek a competent mason to do the work. The labor required to supply such a mason with the necessary stone would be furnished under T.E.R.A. The Clerk was authorized to consult with Mr. W.H. Tompkins regarding the additional tools and equipment needed, and to procure same.

Minutes of the Board Meeting
April 27, 1935

Principals: Seven gentlemen, accompanied by their wives, at the suggestion of the President, were interviewed in connection with their applications for the position of Principal in the new school. Three were interviewed at this meeting: Mr. Baker from Staatsburgh, Mr. Young from Port Chester, and Mr. Lippincott from Shrub Oak. At the conclusion of these interviews, the Board discussed these candidates together with the two who had appeared the week previously.

Minutes of the Board Meeting
May 4, 1935

Principal: The Board then discussed the various candidates for the principalship. This matter was gone over very thoroughly and many reports on the qualifications, experience, and training of all these

candidates were read. In conclusion, the Board was unanimous in selecting Mr. Hillary E. Alexander. My motion of Mr. Mc Adie, seconded by Mr. Sackrider, Mr. Alexander was selected as Principal. By motion of Mr. Tompkins, seconded by the Clerk, the President was authorized to prepare a contract to be signed by the Board and Mr. Alexander, whereby the latter would be bound for a three year period, at the option of the Board, with the provision, however, that should Mr. Alexander be hired a second year, his salary would be increased; and for the third year, a second increase. Such a contract would permit the Board to dispense with Mr. Alexander's services at the end of the first or second year.

Cornerstone: The President suggested that since the community at large had so far had little opportunity to participate in the building program, a cornerstone ceremony might be gratifying. The Board concurred, and Messrs. McAdie, Sackrider, and Tompkins were appointed a committee to make arrangements.



Program Advisor: The President reported to the Board an offer received by him from Loila Stott, nationally known educator, to assist the Principal and teachers at school opening and occasionally during the school year. Mr. Alexander stated that such assistance would be of great value, particularly in a brand new school. The President felt, however, that if the Board wished to accept such a generous offer (Miss Stott offered her services gratis), it should at least pay

the necessary expenses of transportation, etc. Accordingly, the following motion was offered by the Clerk and seconded by Mr. McAdie; that Miss Stott's offer by accepted, and the Board pay her a lump sum for expenses of $250.

Misc.: The Clerk was directed to write to the Putnam County Superintendent of Highways regarding the poor condition of the County Highways travelled by our school buses.

Minutes of the Board Meeting
May 18, 1935

Curriculum: Mr. Alexander presented to the Board his proposal for a curriculum and school program for the new school term. This was read over carefully and discussed. Its provisions were most pleasing to the Board. By motion of Mr. Tompkins, seconded by Mr. McAdie, Mr. Alexander's plan was adopted. It was further pointed out that according to all information available, there would be only six pupils to enter the 9th grade, and that it would be both cheaper and more satisfactory not to teach this grade the first year. By motion of Mr. McAdie, seconded by Mr. Sackrider, it was decided to omit the 9th grade the first year of the new school term.

Minutes of the Board Meeting
June 21, 1935

Misc.: COMMUNICATIONS: Various letters were read from the files of the President. SEWAGE DISPOSAL SURVEY: the President related a request by the Architect that, in accordance with a requirement of the State Health officials, a topographical survey

of a portion of the school site to the rear of the building be prepared in connection with the sewer disposal plant. By motion of Mr. McAdie, seconded by the Clerk, the President was authorized to confer with the Architect, and make necessary arrangements for such survey. ELECTRIC RATES: the President related various conversations with and communications by representatives of the New York State Electric and Gas Corporation, in his effort to secure a low light and power rate for the school. OIL CONTRACT: after considerable discussion which disclosed a considerable savings to the District by the use of #6 oil, a proposal of the Petroleum Heat and Power Company offering delivery of this oil at a cost of about 3½ cents per gallon was acted upon as follows: by motion of Mr. McAdie, seconded by Mr. Tompkins, the proposal of the Petroleum Heat and Power Company was accepted; providing only that the school equipment be found capable of using #6 oil.

Minutes of the Board Meeting
June 28, 1935

Electric Rates: Messrs. Spring and Fossola of the New York State Electric and Gas Corporation submitted the following rate schedule for the Central School: the first 500 K.W. @ 7¢; the next 500 K.W. @ 6¢; the next 1,000 K.W. @ 3¢; in excess of 2,000 K.W. @ 2¢. The members of the Board felt that these rates were too high. With Mr. Cochrane's help, various counter proposals were offered, but these were rejected by the corporation officials. There was considerable discussion, but decision was postponed pending further investigation. Mr. Spring promised a revised schedule.

Minutes of the Board Meeting
July 6, 1935

Power Rates: After lengthy negotiations with the President, ably assisted by the Treasurer, the following schedule of electric rates was submitted by the New York State Electric and Gas Corporation, and by motion of the Clerk, seconded by Mr. Tompkins, accepted by the Board:

| | |
|---|---|
| First 200 K.W. @ 9¢ ) | |
| Next 300 K.W. @ 6¢ ) | In excess of 2,000 |
| Next 500 K.W. @ 4¢ ) | K.W. @ 2¢ |
| Next 1000 K.W. @ 3¢ ) | |

Minutes of the Board Meeting
July 9, 1935

The President reviewed briefly the activities and accomplishments of the year. He mentioned that this year the Board had held approximately five meetings per month; that the acquisition of the twelve acre site had been consummated, together with a restriction agreement protecting it from undesirable encroachment; that an artesian well had been completed, producing a more than bountiful supply of water; that bids were solicited both for the construction of the school, and for a bond issue to pay for it; that the latter at 3.8% was emminently satisfactory, and had been deposited with collateral protection; that the first bids were in excess of appropriations, but that the four low bidders, together with the architect, had successfully reduced the cost without substantial changes in either size or construction; that work on the building site began April 19, and with continued satisfactory progress, enough would be completed to open school in September; that much attention and effort had been given the curriculum; that it was the hope of the Board that the School Building would become a largely

used source of community activity; and that negotiations had only recently been concluded in securing a substantial reduction in the light and power rate for the school. Other pertinent matters were related. His audience rewarded Mr. Scheiber's annual message with prolonged applause. By motion unanimously carried, the Board was given a vote of thanks for its fine work.

The President then asked Commander Tompkins to take the Chair, and in a brief but eloquent eulogy, nominated George B. Sackrider to succeed himself as a Trustee for a five year term. There was much applause, when by motion unanimously carried, Mr. Sackrider was elected by acclaim.

This meeting will long be remembered for its complete unanimity; the absence of friction; and the evident satisfaction of all present.

Minutes of the Board Meeting
August 2, 1935

Misc. At the suggestion of the President, a review and tabulation of the various contracts in connection with the construction project was made, which indicated a safe margin within available funds. Bus Schedule: By motion of Mr. Tompkins, seconded by Mr. Sackrider, the Clerk was authorized to employ Harold White with his bus to go over the tentative routes and check the time. Lighting Fixtures: By motion of the Clerk, seconded by Mr. McAdie, the proposal for lighting fixtures of John D. Tallack, Inc., was increased and accepted at $1,670; in accordance with the original bid submitted, as modiefied by the architect. Ninth Grade: By motion of Mr. McAdie, seconded by Mr. Tompkins, a previous motion to send the ninth grade pupils to Peekskill was rescinded, and the following resolution was adopted; Resolved, that the ninth grade shall

be taught in the new school, and a full Junior High School program be established at once. Teacher: By motion of the Clerk, seconded by Mr. McAdie, the Principal was authorized to hire an additional teacher, at a salary not to exceed $1,200. Tax Roll: By motion of the President, seconded by Mr. Tompkins, the Clerk was authorized to hire clerical assistance to prepare the tax roll. Entrance: By motion of the Clerk, seconded by Mr. Tompkins, Mr. Sackrider was appointed a Committee of One, with power, to cause the entrance to the school property to be suitably widened. Fund Transfer: By motion of Mr. Sackrider, seconded by Mr. Tompkins, the Treasurer was authorized to transfer $25,000 from the Brewster to the Mahopac Bank. Deposit Box: By motion, a previous motion authorizing the Treasurer to rent a safe deposit box, was rescinded; due to the near completion of the vault at the new school. Census: by motion the Clerk was authorized to proceed with the census. Unanimous: All motions and/or resolutions aforementioned were carried unanimously.

Minutes of the Board Meeting
August 11, 1935

Misc.: Change Order: By motion of the President, seconded by Mr. McAdie, the Architect is authorized to issue a change order not to exceed $83, to provide a pitch surface covering on the concrete gymnasium floor slab; same to be an extra to the contract of the Henry W. Streeter Corporation. This change was at the suggestion of the Architect, to insure against possible moisture warping the finished floor. Sewage: By motion of Mr. McAdie, seconded by Mr. Tompkins, the President is authorized with power to complete arrangements for the immediate construction of the Sewage Disposal System, in accordance with changes required by the State Board; at an additional

cost not to exceed $200. Supplies: By motion of Mr. Tompkins, seconded by Mr. McAdie, the proposal of Peckham, Little and Company for various school supplies, in the amount of $185 was accepted. Dr. Fee: Mr. Alexander reported the receipt of a telegram from Dr. Walter Fee, who had been selected for the teaching staff, requesting the Board's release, tue to an offer of an Assistant Professorship at Michigan State University. By motion of Mr. McAdie, seconded by Mr. Tompkins, the release was granted; and Mr. Alexander was authorized to fill the vacancy thus created. Equalization Table: The Clerk reported that the Cortlandt officials had persistently requested the amount of taxes to be raised for the School District in that town. Since the last completed assessment roll for that town was for the year 1934; and since the assessment rolls for Putnam Valley and Carmel were not yet completed, but would be before the school tax would be levied, same being for the year 1935; the Clerk suggested that the assessment rolls for 1933 and 1934 be used for the apportionment of taxes as between the towns. By motion of the President, seconded by Mr. Tompkins, an equalization table based on these assessment rolls was adopted. Unanimous: All motions made and seconded at this meeting were carried unanimously.

Minutes of the Board Meeting
August 30, 1935

Desk and Chair: Mr. Mulwitz reported a telegram from the Royal Mfg. Company, with whom an order for desk and chair units had been placed, in which they requested to be released from the contract; and offering to pay $100 for our inconvenience. The President stated that immediate reply was made, refusing the request; and warning that immediate

purchase from their competitors would be made, at their liability for possible difference in cost. The situation was discussed, with the opinion unanimous that this would be their legal obligation. Since time pressed, it was decided to purchase from Haywood-Wakefield. Accordingly, the following resolution was presented by the President and seconded by Mr. Sackrider, and unanimously carried: Resolved: that Mr. Mulwitz be and hereby is authorized to obtain Haywood-Wakefield's lowest price, and order therefrom the desks and chairs as per samples previously submitted; which were similar to those previously ordered from the Royal Mfg. Company.

Minutes of the Board Meeting
September 6, 1935

School Opening: The Board having planned to open the new school on the ensuing Monday (September 9), its members looked the structure over thoroughly to ascertain if same was fit. Due to the lack of heat, and adverse atmospheric conditions, it was felt that possibly the plaster was not dry enough; and due to various construction delays, it was apparent that a little more time would permit desirable finishing touches. Dr. Rauch, Health Officer and School Physician; Messrs. Streeter, General Contractor; Smith, Plumbing Contractor; and Henderson, Architect's Inspector; all agreed that more time would be needed. Messrs. Henderson, Tompkins and Sackrider felt two weeks would be sufficient, particularly because of the plaster drying. The rest, however, felt one week would be sufficient, particularly since heat would be available at least eight days, and the plaster was already drying for several weeks. Accordingly, motion was made that the opening of school be delayed one week;

carried by Messrs. Scheiber, McAdie and Adams; Messrs. Tompkins and Sackrider dissenting.

Health: Dr. Rauch and District Nurse Grace Hillyer reported the completion of a health program, the main feature of which would be the daily inspection of the children to check contagious diseases, and the proposed installation of a permanent health record system.

Attic Space: In view of previous discussion and inspection, whereby the economic loss of not utilizing the space available on the third floor of the center portion of the building became most evident; and after agreeing that dormers should be installed both front and rear before the roof was closed; by motion of Mr. Tompkins, seconded by Mr. McAdie, the President was authorized to seek and accept a proposal to effect the necessary changes, as he might deem advisable and according to his best judgment.



Dormers: By motion of the President, seconded by Mr. Sackrider, the Architect was authorized to prepare a change order in the amount of $3,750 to cause the installation of three small dormers in the front roof and two large dormers in the rear roof; plus the installation of 2" gypsum plank with 6" N.C. pine flooring; same to be an extra to the contract of the Henry W. Streeter Corporation. By motion of Mr. Tompkins, seconded by Mr. Adams, the Architect was further authorized to prepare a change order in the amount of $25 to provide suitable electric conduit installation to the third floor of the building; same to be an extra to the contract of John D. Tallack, Inc.

Minutes of the Board Meeting
November 7, 1935

Athletic Field: Supervisor Sillect was present with word that the Athletic Field project had been approved. Mr. Silleck was informed that the Board was prepared to proceed; and that Mr. William H. Tompkins had previously been appointed as Foreman for that job.

Payment of 1/3 Retained Percentage: By motion of Mr. McAdie, seconded by Mr. Tompkins, the following resolution was adopted: Resolved, that upon receipt from the Architect of a duly authenticated certificate, one third of the retained percentage under the terms of the General Contract be paid the Henry W. Streeter Corporation, in the amount of $6,285.

Minutes of the Board Meeting
December 14, 1935

Henderson: After the dedication exercises, the Board met with Jimmie Henderson, the Architect's inspector on the job, whose work proved one of the outstanding features of the whole construction operation. Although not on the payroll of the Board, Mr. Henderson's presence on the job was a source of great satisfaction to the Board. Mr. Henderson not only keyed up the tempo of the work so that progress was rapid, but also, and this was most important, he saw to it that every contractor and every subcontractor performed to the letter of the specifications. Accordingly, the Board unanimously joined in expressing its gratification for his good work, and as a small token of its appreciation presented him with its check in the amount of $100.

Dedication: Not less than 650 people attended the Dedication Exercises, at which Mr. Ray

Snyder was the principal speaker.

Minutes of the Board Meeting
January 9, 1936

Boy Scouts: A request from Scoutmaster Kenneth Hoover, for the use of the gymnasium one evening a week for the Boy Scouts, was read. Mr. Hoover was present and pointed out the benefits to the boys, and the community as well. By motion unanimously carried, permission was granted for the use of gymnasium each Thursday evening, without cost; subject to rules and regulations of the Board.

Town Board: Messrs. Singer and Gorley, Justices of the Peace, were present on behalf of the Town Board to request the use of the Community Room and Library, for public and executive meetings of the Town Board. By motion of Mr. McAdie, seconded by the Clerk, this permission was granted, subject to rules and regulations of the Board, without cost, as follows: "Aye": Messrs. Scheiber, McAdie and Adams; "Nay": Messrs. Sackrider and Tompkins.

Oregon A.C.: The Methodist minister, Mr. Hoover, stated that a group of boys at or near Oregon would like to form a basketball team; that he could supervise their use of the gymnasium on the same evening and after the Boy Scout activity; and he accordingly asked this permission. By motion of the Clerk, seconded by Mr. McAdie, and unanimously carried, this request was granted, without cost; subject to rules and regulations of the Board.

Rates: There was discussion of the use of the school facilities by private groups. By motion of the Clerk, seconded by Mr. McAdie,

and unanimously carried, the following schedule of rates was adopted: Gymnasium, $12.00; Community Room, $6.00; Gymnasium and Community Room together, $15.00; Library, $5.00.

Democratic Club: A request for the use of the Gymnasium and Community Room for a dance and supper on February 22, was received from Mrs. John White, on behalf of the Democratic Club of Putnam Valley. By motion of Mr. Tompkins, seconded by Mr. McAdie, this request was unanimously granted, subject to the rates and rules of the Board.

Contractors: By motion of the President, seconded by Mr. Tompkins and unanimously carried, amounts due all contractors were ordered paid in full, except for 5% retained percentage on each.

Principal: Mr. Alexander submitted a list of items a careful check up of the building indicated needed the attention of the various contractors before final payment should be made. He also submitted a list of class room and office supplies much needed. By motion of the Clerk, seconded by Mr. McAdie and unanimously carried, Mr. Alexander was authorized to purchase such items up to $250.

Tipping: By motion of the President, seconded by Mr. McAdie, and unanimously carried, no tipping will be permitted in the Putnam Valley School, at any of the functions held therein.

W.P.A.: The progress of the Athletic Field project was discussed. The Clerk reported that the W.P.A. Director, Mr. George Conrad, had requested that the Board put a steam shovel in the bank being excavated, to expedite the work. The President stated that Mr. De Christopher had submitted to him a

price of $35 per day for a gasoline shovel, and bulldozer with it. By motion of the Clerk, seconded by Mr. McAdie, Mr. Sackrider was authorized to hire this shovel and bulldozer, at the price stated.

Inspection: By motion of Mr. Sackrider, seconded by Mr. McAdie, all school busses were ordered inspected one a month by Mr. Elmer Barger.

Insurance: The question of the amount of fire insurance the District should carry on the school and its contents was discussed. By motion of Mr. McAdie, seconded by Mr. Tompkins, it was decided to carry $170,000 on the building and $12,000 on the contents.

Old Schools: By motion of the Clerk, seconded by the President, the following resolution was unanimously adopted: Resolved, that the new Central School being now completed, the properties of the five former School Districts revert to their legal owners.

Minutes of the Board Meeting
March 17, 1936

Testimonial Dinner: By motion of Mr. Tompkins, seconded by Mr. Sackrider, the request of Judge John White on behalf of a Citizen's Committee, for the use of the Auditorium, Community Room and Kitchen, for a testimonial dinner for the Board, on the evening of May 30, was granted.

Minutes of the Board Meeting
April 4, 1936

Tax Exemption: The President reported action to include the assessed value of the State Park Lands for school taxes.

Report of the Principal
May, 1936

Homemaking Department: Miss Treva Kauffman, the State Supervisor of Homemaking from the State Education Department, visited the school on Tuesday, April 21. She seemed greatly pleased with the work we are doing and stated that our Homemaking Department would be approved as soon as the Junior High School was approved.

Public Health Association: At a meeting of the executive committee of the Public Health of Putnam Valley and Kent District No. 1, held April 30, 1936, the following action was taken. Resolution: "Whereas, the Public Health Nurse of this Association gives much time to school health services, and whereas in the past, it has been the custom for school districts to pay for the services, we request that your budget for the coming year include $1.00 per pupil for the service."

H.H. Wells Brewster: A very fine letter has been received from Mr. Wells of Brewster, in which he states he has heard a great many splendid things regarding our school. He is chairman of a committee which recently recommended shop, homemaking, and a special grade for backward pupils and in addition, he recommended adding three rooms to their school.

Visitors: Dr. Alpert, and four other teachers who were formerly with the Brooklyn Ethical Culture School, visited our school on Saturday, April 25. They are keenly interested in modern education and were greatly pleased to see evidences of this type of work being done in rural areas.

Coma Club Dance: A request has been received through Commander Tompkins for the use of the building for a dance on June 6 by the Coma Club.

Ladies Aid: A request has been received through Mr. Hoover for the use of the building for a play to be on behalf of the Ladies Aid sometime during the last week of May.

Report of the Principal

Visitors: About 90 principals and teachers and parents from various schools throughout Westchester County, visited our school on Wednesday, May 20. The first group arrived at about 10:30 and a few arrived as late as 5:00 p.m. The majority were present all afternoon and tea was served at 2:45 by a group of Junior High School girls.

Desks and Chairs: A Supervisor of the Intermediate Grades of Yonkers took the dimensions of our desks and chairs. Yonkers is building a new building, and the Putnam Valley model of desks and chairs may be purchased.

"Black Cats": A play called "The Black Cats" was presented in the auditorium under the auspices of the Ladies' Aid on May 26.

Use of Building: The following organizations have used the building during the school year: Ladies Aid; Coma Club; Boy Scouts; Ladies Recreation Group; Oregon Athletic Club; Putnam Valley Grange; Peekskill Choral Club; P.T.A.; Town Board; Democratic Club; Senior High School Girls Athletic Club.

Report of the Nurse

For other corrective work, we have secured two pair of glasses for 4th and 5th grade boys and

had two pairs repaired.

On May 13 Dr. Rauch had an immunization clinic in the Nurse's office. Seven children received toxin of which only one large dose is given now for diptheria prevention. Sixteen children, previously innoculated, received the Schich Test and four were positive, indicating re-toxiding this week. Ten children and four teachers were vaccinated. Only two of these being successful and there were re-vaccinating of the others. (Since then, we have immunized nineteen infancts and pre-school children.)

In Health and Safety Education we have continued our Junior High School first-aid class, with the exception of one boy who "Did not want to come anymore." Three of the little girls have shown marked ability in this class, making supplies and bandages, for steadiness of action, and caution in undertaking only what they know. They have assisted the nurse in caring for some of their classmates and always do such a finished job.

## AS TIME MARCHES ON

After some twelve or fifteen years of peaceful, harmonious relations between the Board and the community, disputes broke out with a small group of the parents who felt that more could be done to teach the special school subjects more effectively. At the suggestion of its President, the State Education Department was asked to make a survey, which they did over two days and then sent the Board the following report as set forth in the Putnam Valley Post of February, 1948:

> STATE REPORT LAUDS PUTNAM VALLEY SCHOOL PROGRAM
>
> Putnam Valley's Central School offers "a type of education far richer than that provided in the average public elementary school," according to an Evaluation Report received last week by school authorities from the State Department of Education.
>
> Made after a thorough two day survey of the school, at the request of the Board of Education, the Evaluation had also been vigorously advocated by representatives of Parents, Inc., which alleged that there was a lack of emphasis on discipline and the '3-Rs' in the school.
>
> Children's Progress Normal: The report of

the Evaluation signed by Dr. Walter A. LeBaron stated that "the supervisor gave rather careful attention to this problem in the visit" and after a careful study concluded that the work of the students in the in the subjects in question is "normal and satisfactory."

It went on to state that "classes are small and the rooms are informal and friendly places. A highly valuable feature of the teaching program is the amount and quality of special teaching in art, music, shop, homemaking and physical education, which is made available to all children from grades one to four inclusive. Hot lunch is provided in an attractive cafeteria."

The evaluators concluded that "the school is to be commended for its program," and also praised Principal Hilton E. Alexander, who, it was found, "has an unusually complete grasp of the individual problems and needs of the children and is serving a highly important function in individual guidance."

Many Services Provided: The report states, "The school has the part-time services of a nurse, a dental hygienist, a psychologist, a county guidance person and a dentist. The school cooperates with the New York State Youth Commission in a program of recreation."

"Home and school relationships," the report stated, "are in the main cordial and cooperative. Occasionally, a small group of parents feel that more can be done to teach the skill subjects more effectively; however, more cooperation with principal and teachers and less external criticism will be far more effective in realizing these aims."

The evaluation was made on January 22 and 23, 1948, by representatives of the Education

Department, who visited all classes and surveyed the administrative records of the school.

The same edition of The Putnam Valley Post contained the following editorial:

Good Investment: We don't have to be experts to know that prices have gone up. Our grocer's bills are proof enough. During the war and in the years since, we have had to pay more for what we eat, what we wear, what we do.

Besides the costs of eggs and butter, there are other costs, perhaps less obvious--but certainly no less important--that have risen.

One of these is the cost of education.

What does the cost of education include--good education that prepares the young children of today for citizenship tomorrow? It includes the cost of teachers, an adequately paid, trained staff of teachers, with classes small enough to allow individual attention. It includes the cost of equipment, of decent, attractive school rooms, of well-kept grounds.

Here in Putnam Valley, we are lucky. The recent report on our school, quoted on page one of this issue, is a statement of which we can all be proud because we know that our children have the opportunity for good schooling, proud because we have been farsighted in providing this education.

But other communities are not so lucky. In fact, in large sections of the State of New York, schools are facing a crisis that may pay off in delinquency, illiteracy, crime.

The facts say that many, if not most children

in the state are going to dirty, overcrowded, run-down schools, manned by wretchedly underpaid teachers. The facts also say that present school budgets are far too small to alleviate or improve these conditions, and that the situation is going to get worse. It will get worse because the birth rate in the last decade has increased enormously, and school enrollments in the next ten to fifteen years will increase proportionately, though our present school facilities can accommodate no more.

The facts say that we need more teachers, but we are going to get less because teachers' salaries are so low. The facts say that most schools need equipment they cannot afford. The present administration has been whittling down state aid until most schools have had to get along on budgets cut to the bone.

There is a bill in the State Legislature which aims to do something about these facts. It's called the Young-Milmoe Bill.

Briefly, the Young-Milmoe Bill calls for a program of State Aid to help all schools meet their increased costs, and to especially help schools meet their increased costs, and to especially help schools in poorer communities provide an adequate education for all its children. If the bill were passed, it would provide that a minimum of $200 would be spent for each child in elementary school in the State of New York, and a minimum of $260 for each child in secondary school.

How would this cost be carried? The State itself would, according to the provisions of the bill, guarantee <u>at least</u> one half of the amount. The community would, if possible, raise the other half through local taxes. The rate proposed by the bill is $5.00 on each $1000 of real property valuation.

However, in poorer communities, which cannot afford to carry this expense, the State would make up the difference with larger grants. In other words, poorer communities would receive more aid than wealthier communities, and the tax burden would not continue to fall on small property owners whose real estate taxes are high enough.

This means that every child in the State of New York would have an equal break, an equal chance for a fine education, an equal opportunity for the fair start in life that is his right.

Putnam Valley is lucky. Its taxpayers were farsighted in voting for a school which today is worth twice its original cost. But we, too, need the additional help the bill offers. Good education may be costly. But it costs far more to care for a child in trouble than to protect him from trouble. It costs less, in the long run, to give each child the kind of first step he deserves.

And from the June, 1948 edition of the

Putnam Valley Post:

Our School: The United States is one of the few countries in the world in which the responsibility for education lies in the hands of the people. The people of Putnam Valley can be proud of the way they have handled this responsibility.

Through farsightedness and wisdom, a school has been built and has grown, a school that has provided a fine beginning in life for Putnam Valley children. The record of the school during the past year alone testifies to the effectiveness of the Putnam Valley Central School.

After making a thorough inspection of the school, the State Education Department reported that the Putnam Valley school program was far superior to that of most schools in the state. Another impartial report, coming from the Peekskill High School system, has reported that the work of Putnam Valley graduates is superior to graduates of neighboring schools.

An even deeper indication of the school's role in the community came last month, when parents, teachers, and neighbors gathered to honor the principal of the school, Hilton E. Alexander. It was a rare tribute for a community to pay an educator. It was a gesture of gratitude to a man who has worked steadily, quietly, and devotedly for the good of the school. Mr. Alexander's career is in itself a kind of symbol of the school itself, of the respect for the serious job of educating children which gives the school its special quality.

To keep a school like ours going forward, we need men and women at the helm who are "trustees" in the best sense, who are interested not only in the purse-strings of school administration, but in forming the ideas and characters of future citizens.

On July 13, another member of the Board of Education will be chosen. The Post feels that Mrs. Margaret Ungberg is well qualified for this position, and that the community is fortunate to have a person of her capabilities ready to join the trustees of education in our town.

On page one of this issue are the qualifications for voting in a school election. We hope that as many people as possible will exercise their responsibility for education, a responsibility which has so far been discharged with wisdom, vision, and pride.

## FINIS

Out of the efforts for a better school system in Putnam Valley came more than a handsome colonial brick school building and a greatly improved school system.

We have covered here the first two or three years of the activity of Putnam Valley's first Board of Education, which with the additional 22 years of the writer's service as President, marked a period of significant achievement by the first Board and successive Boards.

This was based on consistent cooperation, unity and harmony between the Board of Education and the teachers, as well as with the parents and taxpayers.

Out of the numerous communications that the writer received furing the course of the change from the Little Red School House system to the Central School System, the following are a few letters which may be of interest.

Personal relations and human relations

are often of primary importance. After the first Board elections, the President heard that Commander Elijah Tompkins had stated that he had appreciated the fact that he had received the highest vote, but that he felt somewhat unhappy because the President had done so much hard work and had received a smaller vote. The writer thereupon promptly wrote to Commander Tompkins stating:

> "I want to say to you again that to me one of the finest things about the election was your selection for the long term, as I feel that you have much to contribute and that the people of the town are fortunate in having your services."

Another communication of interest was that which the writer received from Ray P. Snyder, Director of the Rural Education Division, who on receiving a report of the election wrote:

> "I am mighty pleased with the outcome of the Board of Education election and particularly that you are President of the Board. This insures tactful and efficient administration of the Central School District. This kind of administration is highly important if the District is to function to its fullest capacity."

Also, from the State Education Department was a communication from J. Cayce Morrison,

Assistant Commissioner for Elementary Education,

to me which stated:

> "It is refreshing and encouraging to find a Board of Education that wants to plan its school program before planning its building. I should be glad at any time to talk with you concerning the curriculum and other related matters."

And, from the City Fusion Party of New York City:

> "Dear Mr. Scheiber:
>
> It is with sincerity when I say to you that I am very sorry you could not see your way clear to accept the 12th Senatorial District nomination. The City Fusion Party of the 1st A.D. felt that your standing in the district was such that you had an excellent chance of election.
>
> However, I do understand that your obligations to see the Country Central School Project through to a completion was something that took precedence and so, while regreting your inability to accept the senatorial nomination, I wish you all success with the new school.
>
> Sincerely yours,
>
> Myron A. Kesner
> Executive Member"

It was for me twenty-five happy, harmonious, productive years. Reverting, however, to the children, the community and the school which are

the factors that are and that will continue to be basic and of primary importance, it can be said with complete accuracy that our educational standards have improved immensely and many families have been attracted to Putnam Valley because of the excellence of its educational facilities and its greatly improved conveniences as a community center. However, for most of our people, the school has always been there, so that there is perhaps an understandable tendency to take it for granted.

It is my hope, however, that this record will be of interest to and act as a reminder to the students who attended the newly built Putnam Valley Central School, and their children and perhaps their grandchildren, that at the time it was built, a deep depression and a painful inflation existed and that as a matter of economy, the State Education Department was very reluctant to approve the centralization of less than twelve or fifteen rural school districts because of the increased state aid which it would have to give. At first, it was suggested that we merge with the Garrison

School District until it was made clear that this would impose an impossible trip for our children. However, as a result of much perserverance and persistence, our application was finally approved, subject, of course, to a vote by the parents and tax-payers that they favored centralization.

They did so vote, and also despite the Depression, likewise voted for what was to them a monumental $200,000 bond issue and did build the Putnam Valley School.

Thus, at its dedication, I was able to state, in the words of the poet, John Ruskin, "Into this edifice has gone such work as our descendents will thank us for, and that men will say as they look upon our labor, 'See what our fathers did for us.'"

WICCOPEE SCHOOLHOUSE

OREGON CORNERS SCHOOLHOUSE

TOMPKINS CORNER SCHOOL - 1928

OSCAWANA HEIGHTS SCHOOLHOUSE

ADAMS CORNERS SCHOOLHOUSE

THE FIRST PARTY

AT THE NEW PUTNAM VALLEY CENTRAL SCHOOL

# A B O U T  T H E  A U T H O R

The author's Putnam County activities have included the following: Town Counsel, Putnam Valley - 18 years; President, Putnam Valley Board of Education 1932-57; President, Putnam County School Boards Association 1949-50; Member of Founding Committee and President of the original Putnam County BOCES (Bureau of Cooperative Educational Services).

Presented to Israel Ben Scheiber by his 'Friends and Neighbors' of Putnam Valley on October 12, 1947:

> "We come tonight with affection and respect for a man whose work, strength and wisdom has given our town stature in government, breadth in education, width in its vision and aspiration. Courage and humanity and self-sacrifice are rare in one man, and in Ben they have made not only a leader and a builder, but a friend. Good neighbor, thanks. And from this valley that we love, we bring you these warm wishes for a full, rich road ahead."

"Israel Ben Scheiber celebrated his 85th birthday in March 1976. Ben is probably the oldest active arbitrator in the United States and is, of course, a delightful man and a splendid labor relations professional." (Harold Newman, Director, New York State Public Relations Board, Bulletin, Vol. 7, No. 4, April 1976).